Commentary

June 2006

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The Espionage Act and the "New York Times"
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Books in Review
Leslie Lenkowsky • Hillel Halkin • Bret Stephens
Dan Seligman • Joshua Kurlantzick • David Pryce-Jones

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Commentary

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American Jewish Committee
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Commentary
June 2006

Letters from Readers

The Espionage Act and the "New York Times"

To the Editor:

Gabriel Schoenfeld illuminates one horn of the dilemma posed by unauthorized disclosures of classified information ["Has the *New York Times* Violated the Espionage Act?," March]. Certainly the government has the authority and the duty to protect the nation against disclosures that could genuinely threaten national security. But there are reasons why prosecutors have never yet chosen to adopt Mr. Schoenfeld's single-minded view of what the law requires.

When the *New York Times* disclosed the President's warrantless surveillance program last December 16, it was not the first time in recent years that the strictures of Section 798 of Title 18 of the United States Code had arguably been violated. It was not even the hundredth time.

Newspapers and books have routinely purveyed stories involving classified communications intelligence for decades, and in several cases their authors have been rewarded not with prison but with prizes and celebrity status (think Bob Woodward, Seymour Hersh).

Nor are the offending publications all purportedly "liberal" in orientation. Almost certainly the most prolific conduit for publication of classified information, including communications-intelligence information, has been Bill Gertz of the *Washington Times*, who throughout most of the Clinton administration reported directly from classified sources just about every few days, and still does from time to time.

Yet these celebrated reporters still walk freely among us despite the fact that, if intelligence officials are to be believed, their stories have degraded intelligence methods and cost taxpayers many millions of dollars.

The point is that, while government agencies pursue leakers of classified information with whatever tools they can muster, it has long been accepted government practice to keep hands off the press that publishes the information. Have prosecutors somehow remained ignorant of the statutes that Mr. Schoenfeld so acutely analyzes? Probably not.

Rather, it appears there are competing societal interests at stake that until now have induced government to adopt a kind of constructive ambiguity on the matter and, in practice, to renounce the power to penalize press outlets.

What are those competing societal interests? One is the important role played by the press in the process of policy development. Without romanticizing the press or ignoring its evident defects, it seems objectively true that news coverage plays an integral role in the daily operation of government. Both for good and for ill, the news media help to set the public-policy agenda and to drive the congressional-oversight process. Efforts to impose new legal barriers on press coverage could have unpredictable adverse consequences.

Another societal interest is the ability of the press to compensate for unwarranted official secrecy by publishing information that should not or need not be classified. While it is true that the nation's most sensitive secrets are classified, not everything that is classified is sensitive. In fact, the classification system has become a bizarre confection of genuine national-security secrets, bureaucratic fetishes, self-serving political manipulations, and inconsistencies. One example: the 1997 intelligence budget total was declassified in October 1997, but the 1957 and the 1967 budget totals remain classified. Why? Because the CIA says

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so! There is no other discernible reason.

I recently acquired a historical document that indicates that the 1972 budget appropriation for the National Security Agency was $65.2 million. This information remains classified, and is not acknowledged even today by the NSA. Furthermore, since it pertains specifically to communications-intelligence activities of the United States, albeit historical ones, my knowing and willful disclosure of it could conceivably be in violation of the same Section 798 that Mr. Schoenfeld suspects has been traduced by the *New York Times*. Should I therefore be prosecuted? Should COMMENTARY be penalized for publishing the information in this letter? That would be absurd.

There seems to be, however, an unstated bargain with government that the press will not abuse this freedom beyond a certain point. The most influential purveyors of classified leaks also tend to be the most responsible in their editorial processes, consulting government officials prior to publication and offering them opportunities to argue against disclosure. As is well known, the *New York Times* held back its story on warrantless surveillance for a year.

Of course, not all classified secrets that might come into possession of the press are trivial and inconsequential. One can imagine circumstances in which a news organization commits such an outrageous breach of faith by publishing sensitive secrets as to invite public opprobrium and nullify the government's tacit acceptance of the freedom to publish classified information.

Has the *New York Times* committed such a breach with its warrantless-surveillance story? I doubt it.

STEVEN AFTERGOOD
Federation of American Scientists
Washington, D.C.

TO THE EDITOR:

The title of Gabriel Schoenfeld's article is misleading. If the *Times* broke the law (and Mr. Schoenfeld is correct, in my view, that it did), it was not the Espionage Act but rather a separate and very specific statute that makes it a crime to publish communications intelligence. Be that as it may, however, the important question is not whether there was a technical violation of the statute but rather why the information was given to the *Times* and whether the paper should have published it.

The Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act of 1978 (FISA) was passed after a series of leaks to the press revealed that Presidents had improperly used their power to conduct warrantless surveillance to spy on their political opponents while also gathering legitimate foreign intelligence. Congress wanted to make clear—to intelligence officers, Presidents, and private citizens alike—the circumstances under which it was appropriate to conduct electronic surveillance; it also wanted to have judges supervise the process. FISA was successful beyond anyone's expectations. It permitted far more surveillance for legitimate purposes than had ever been done, and it prevented abuses. There were also no leaks about its workings.

When President Bush made the momentous and, in my view, clearly illegal decision to authorize warrantless surveillance, he broke this bargain. The result was that many officials were concerned about what the government was doing, and one or more of them went to the press as others had done prior to FISA's enactment.

The administration has said that it did not go to Congress to seek an amendment to FISA after the attacks of September 11 because it did not believe that it could get the law changed without information leaking out that would jeopardize the new program. It has never elaborated on that implausible explanation—implausible because Congress's record in enacting and amending FISA showed that it could be done without leaks, and because ordering this warrantless program was itself almost guaranteed to produce leaks.

What should the *Times* have done when it received the information? Exactly what it did do. Not rush to print but rather seek to verify the story and give the government ample opportunity to persuade the paper that the story should not run or that some details should be withheld. The *Times* has never explained why it held the story for a year or why it then decided to print it; nor do we know what specific facts it withheld.

Mr. Schoenfeld argues that the paper committed not only a shameful act but a crime. My view is that it may have violated a criminal statute but that its conduct was far from shameful. There is no evidence to back up the claim that the *Times* published the story as a reflection of the views presented on its editorial page about the government's conduct of the war on terror. The separation of those two functions at the *Times* is well known, and the delay in publishing the story reflects far greater deference to the government's views than is evident in its editorials.

The key question is whether the story published in the *Times* was likely to cause harm to national security. The *Times* concluded that it would not and that the public was entitled to know about a program that many consider to be illegal. Mr. Schoenfeld argues that the leak must have caused harm. He suggests that al Qaeda learned from the *Times* article that the NSA had "succeeded" in listening to all of its conversations. But the December 16 story said no such thing, only that the government was trying to intercept some conversations without a warrant. It is true that al Qaeda may be sloppy from time to time in how it communicates, but surely not because it did not believe, long before the *Times* published its story, that the NSA was trying to listen to its conversations. All the story revealed was that the NSA was listening to some calls without a warrant—not how successful it was or even under what circumstances it was trying to listen in.

The way to move forward to protect national security is not to indict the *Times* but to have the government explain what new authority it needs and then to have the Congress consider further amendments to FISA.

MORTON HALPERIN
Open Society Institute
Washington, D.C.

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TO THE EDITOR:

Gabriel Schoenfeld raises a legitimate if somewhat provocative question in "Has the *New York Times* Violated the Espionage Act?" The case he presents is compelling, but in the end his assertions about the reach and intent of the 1917 Espionage Act are highly troubling.

During the 90 years of the law's existence, no one in government has attempted to push it in the direction Mr. Schoenfeld advocates, because to do so would have been constitutionally questionable and politically incendiary. It would also have stunted vital governmental processes and subverted political discourse.

Contemporary political conditions are even more inhospitable to such adventurism. The nation's capital has become an information-detention center. Thousands of federal employees are generating secrets at a breathtaking pace, even reclassifying material that has been in the public domain for decades. Congressional oversight has been tepid. Courts have been deferential. In these circumstances, the press remains one of the most important guarantors of effective political inquiry and discourse.

The federal prosecutors who chose to go after two recipients of leaked secrets in the AIPAC case dramatically broadened the scope of the Espionage Act. Prosecuting the *New York Times* or other members of the press for a practice that has proved repeatedly to be in the public interest would go even farther. Even the government prosecutors in the AIPAC case concede that applying the Espionage Act to the press "would raise legitimate and serious issues and would not be undertaken lightly."

Their caution is well founded. To put in the hands of government officials unprecedented power to punish the press for publishing truthful information of real public concern is a frontal assault on the First Amendment. It assumes an infallibility on the part of political leaders that is not warranted given the reality of governmental abuse, mistakes, and miscalculations.

To interpret the Espionage Act in a way that equates journalists engaged in democratic discourse with spies engaged in perfidy would make the nation less secure as well as less free. Meaningful discourse about things that matter would be reduced to only those facts that are officially sanctioned, a prospect chilling enough even if all secrets were responsibly made and truly essential to national—as opposed to political—security.

PAUL MCMASTERS
First Amendment Center
Arlington, Virginia

TO THE EDITOR:

I completely agree with Gabriel Schoenfeld's analysis that the *New York Times* should be prosecuted for violating the Espionage Act of 1917—right after George Bush is impeached for violating the Fourth Amendment of the U.S. Constitution. You do not have to be a constitutional lawyer to realize that

> [t]he right of the people to be secure in their persons, houses, papers, and effects, against unreasonable searches and seizures, shall not be violated, and no warrants shall issue, but upon probable cause, supported by oath or affirmation, and particularly describing the place to be searched, and the persons or things to be seized

prohibits the NSA wiretapping operation. But we would, of course, not know about that operation without the "treasonous" action of the *New York Times*.

MARK KUPERBERG
Swarthmore College
Swarthmore, Pennsylvania

TO THE EDITOR:

I am sure that Gabriel Schoenfeld's call for prosecuting the *New York Times* has no political motivation whatsoever and could be sustained without the absurd proposition that al Qaeda never suspected its communications might be under surveillance. I am equally sure that Mr. Schoenfeld's interest in investigating the *Times* for (possibly) breaking the law and his total lack of interest in investigating the administration for (almost certainly) breaking the law can be explained somehow (good luck!). What remains uncertain is who, exactly, benefits from this concern for state secrets and complete disregard for both the Bill of Rights and the checks and balances of our Constitution. What does seem clear is that positions like his, heartily supported by the most secretive White House in history, are making a mockery of democracy in this country.

JON SHERMAN
Chicago, Illinois

TO THE EDITOR:

If letting the public know that we have a law-violating President who needs to be impeached violates the law, I only hope the *New York Times* continues to violate the laws of tyrants.

JOE BERNT
E.W. Scripps School of Journalism, Ohio University
Athens, Ohio

GABRIEL SCHOENFELD writes:

In the brief interval since my article appeared, the issue of government secrets has gone from hot to scorching.

First, the Justice Department's criminal investigation into the NSA leak is proceeding apace. A parallel investigation is under way into a story by Dana Priest that appeared in the *Washington Post* last November, reporting that the CIA had established clandestine prisons for al-Qaeda suspects somewhere in Eastern Europe. Already one high-ranking CIA officer, Mary O. McCarthy, has been dismissed by the agency for allegedly playing some role in the unauthorized disclosure.

Second, two other proceedings involving government secrets, the I. Lewis "Scooter" Libby case and the AIPAC case, continue to generate new and controversial revelations as they head toward trial. Opening a new front in the leak wars, the FBI has been attempting to retrieve classified documents, apparently connected to the AIPAC case in some way, from the estate of the late investigative journalist, Jack Anderson.

Third, the broader journalistic fraternity has circled the wagons around the journalists and media outlets that published the leaks. In March, James Risen and Eric Lichtblau, the two *Times* reporters who broke

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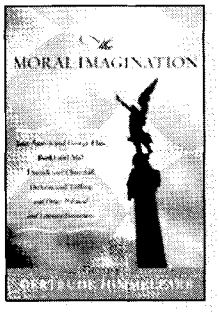

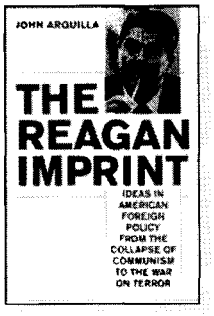

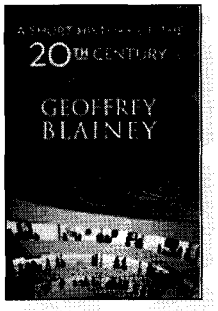

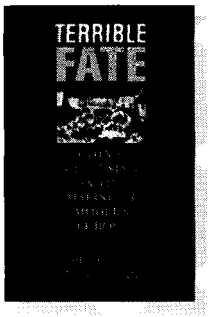

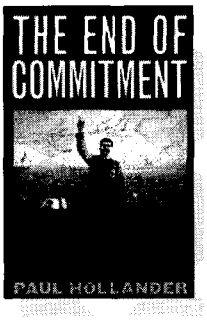

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the NSA story, were awarded a Goldsmith prize by Harvard's Joan Shorenstein Center on the Press, Politics & Public Policy. In April, the two won a Pulitzer prize, as did the *Post*'s Dana Priest.

In its news pages, the *Times* has twice taken brief note of my article and the controversy surrounding the paper's actions. In a story appearing in early February, Bill Keller, the *Times*'s top editor, defended these actions on the grounds that the NSA story had "prompted an important national discussion of the balance between security and liberty." In subsequent weeks, and particularly after the Goldsmith and Pulitzer prizes were awarded, he expanded and amplified his remarks, praising his paper and its reporters for making known a "highly secret program" in the face of vigorous official objections:

> It's rare that the government makes a concerted, top-level appeal to hold a story (I can think of only four or five instances in my nineteen years as an editor), and it's even more rare that we agree. But we take such appeals seriously. We gave senior officials an opportunity to make their case. They laid out a detailed argument that publishing what we then knew would compromise ongoing anti-terror operations.

After the Pulitzer was announced, the *Times*, in a full-page advertisement congratulating Lichtblau and Risen, observed that the NSA story "was extraordinarily difficult to report," especially because the two reporters "had to win the trust of those in the government who [knew] about the program," and that the "peril [was] so great for public officials who talked about it." It then concluded by suggesting that the story had caused little or no damage to national security; after all, the NSA program itself had "uncovered no active al-Qaeda plots and [had] led investigators to only a few potential terrorists in the country whom they did not know about from other sources."

These developments and statements are useful to bear in mind as I respond to my critics. Let me begin with Mark Kuperberg, whose main point is that George Bush should be impeached for initiating the NSA program. Waxing sarcastic, he expresses gratitude to the *Times* for its "'treasonous'" conduct in bringing Bush's actions to light.

But, of course, not every violation of the Espionage Act constitutes treason. The statute encompasses a number of lesser offenses, and those are what I was discussing in my article. I never accused the *Times* of treason or even mentioned the word. Seeing Professor Kuperberg attribute it to me in quotation marks is another reminder, if one were needed, of how political discussion is routinely conducted in the academy these days.

Nor did my article concern itself with the question of whether Bush committed an impeachable offense in connection with the NSA surveillance of terrorists—as Joe Bernt, another professor, assumes in his declamatory missive. Even if it could be conclusively shown that President Bush had somehow violated the law—and, *pace* Morton Halperin, that proposition remains debatable—it would still leave unresolved the issues surrounding the actions of the *New York Times* in disclosing highly classified government secrets.

As I noted in my article, the secret NSA program revealed by the *Times* was not a case, like Watergate, of the executive branch of government running amok and trampling on civil liberties for personal or political gain or other nefarious purposes. Justice Department lawyers had reviewed the program at length, and leading members of both parties in both chambers of Congress were briefed about it on numerous occasions. If any of those members of Congress had objections to what the NSA was doing, they had a variety of proper means by which to register their dissenting views, and even to seek legal redress, without turning to the press.

Government officials in the executive branch likewise had other avenues. As I pointed out in my article, intelligence officers who uncover illegal conduct have, under the Intelligence Community Whistleblowers Act of 1998, a set of procedures that allow them to report misdeeds through classified channels and that ensure their complaints will be duly and properly considered. These procedures emphatically do not encompass blowing vital secrets by disclosing them to al Qaeda via the *New York Times*.

In this connection, it is worth reflecting on Bill Keller's comment about the great "peril" to which public officials exposed themselves for revealing government secrets to the *Times*. Are these "whistleblowers" heroes, as the *Times* and other newspapers like to portray them, or something else entirely?

One way to answer this is to consider the oath that government employees must swear before being granted access to official secrets. The oath is contained in a standard document entitled "Classified Information Nondisclosure Agreement," which includes the following words:

> I have been advised that the unauthorized disclosure, unauthorized retention, or negligent handling of classified information by me could cause damage or irreparable injury to the United States or could be used to advantage by a foreign nation.
>
> I hereby agree that I will never divulge classified information to anyone unless: (a) I have officially verified that the recipient has been properly authorized by the United States Government to receive it; or (b) I have been given prior written notice of authorization from the United States Government Department or Agency (hereinafter Department or Agency) responsible for the classification of the information or last granting me a security clearance that such disclosure is permitted. . . .
>
> I further understand that I am obligated to comply with laws and regulations that prohibit the unauthorized disclosure of classified information. . . .
>
> I have been advised that any unauthorized disclosure of classified information by me may

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constitute a violation, or violations, of United States criminal laws. . . .

I understand that all conditions and obligations imposed upon me by this Agreement apply during the time I am granted access to classified information, and at all times thereafter. . . .

I reaffirm that the provisions of the *espionage laws* [emphasis added], other federal criminal laws and executive orders applicable to the safeguarding of classified information have been made available to me; that I have returned all classified information in my custody; that I will not communicate or transmit classified information to any unauthorized person or organization; that I will promptly report to the Federal Bureau of Investigation any attempt by an unauthorized person to solicit classified information.

No one who appends his name to this non-disclosure agreement is compelled to do so; government officials sign it of their own free will. Is there anything about it that is in any way unclear? The U.S. government rightly does not think so. For passing relatively innocuous secrets (innocuous, that is, compared to what was contained in the *New York Times* article of December 16) to two officials of AIPAC, Lawrence Franklin, a Defense Department official, was recently sentenced to twelve years in prison.

The leakers of classified government documents are not heroes. Often acting from partisan motives or for personal gain, and almost always under the cover of

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WOLFRAM WETTE
TRANSLATED BY DEBORAH LUCAS SCHNEIDER
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anonymity, they are lawbreakers willing to imperil the nation but not their careers. Journalists who publish sensitive intelligence secrets for the entire world to read, sometimes also from partisan motives (see James Risen's Bush-bashing book, *State of War*) or for personal gain and sometimes out of a conviction, now widespread in their profession, that they are journalists first and citizens subject to U.S. law second (see all the various statements of Bill Keller), fall into the same suspect class.

Although portions of the Espionage Act are riddled with ambiguous language, the provisions governing unauthorized *publication* of classified communications intelligence are perfectly clear, and the *Times*'s actions unequivocally violated them. I find it striking that not one of my correspondents challenges this; Morton Halperin explicitly affirms it. Instead, my interlocutors offer reasons why the law has not been enforced in the past and should not be enforced in this instance.

Steven Aftergood, whose reasoned and well-informed letter stands in welcome contrast to those from the sloganeering professors, makes this case most cogently. Let me attempt to answer his various points.

To begin with, I would not quarrel with Mr. Aftergood's claim that the government has a tendency to classify far too much information, and sometimes does so for reasons having little to do with national security, resulting in the "bizarre confection" to which he refers. But the answer is hardly for the press to appoint itself as arbiter of what is legitimately secret and what is not.

We live in a democracy in which Congress sets the laws and oversees the way they are carried out. If Congress, representing the American people, comes to believe that the executive branch is creating too many secrets, it has ample power to set things right, by funding faster and better declassification and/ or by changing the declassification rules. If, by contrast, a newspaper like the *New York Times* believes it has an obligation to publish a government secret, it should be prepared to accept the consequences as they have been set in law by the American people and its elected officials.

One of my correspondents, Jon Sherman, calls this idea a "mockery of democracy" and another, Joe Bernt, calls it "the law of tyrants." In fact, maintaining national-security secrets in an orderly way is integral to the workings of democracy, essential to its protection, fundamental to the rule of law, and—despite what a raft of civil libertarians and journalists is now saying—entirely consistent with what our Founding Fathers had in mind. Indeed, as Joseph Story's classic commentary on the Constitution make clear, the idea that the First Amendment "was intended to secure every citizen an absolute right to . . . print whatever he might please, without any responsibility, public or private . . . is a supposition too wild to be indulged by any rational man."

Mr. Aftergood's contention—citing the reporting of Bob Woodward, Seymour Hersh, and Bill Gertz—that Section 798 of the Espionage Act has been broken repeatedly in recent decades without eliciting prosecution is, alas, indisputable. Without doubt, he is also correct that there is a great reluctance within the Justice Department to pursue cases against the media. In a statement filed in the AIPAC case, the department (as Paul McMasters observes in his letter) acknowledged this explicitly, noting that "the fact that there has never been such a prosecution speaks for itself."

But one of my purposes in writing my article was to challenge this stance. Our attitudes and practices regarding government secrecy urgently need to adapt to the new world that was created on September 11. The good news is that government policy toward secrets *has* been changing. The bad new is that it has been changing in only the most haphazard and ill-thought-out ways.

A case in point is the decision to bring charges against the two AIPAC officials, itself an unprecedented application of the Espionage Act. Even if we were to assume, for the sake of argument, that the two lobbyists are guilty as charged, the classified information they are alleged to have improperly obtained and transmitted pales, as I have already noted, in comparison with the closely-guarded secrets that were conveyed to al Qaeda via the pages of the *New York Times*.

At the same time, the provision of the Espionage Act (Section 793) that the AIPAC men are charged with violating is notoriously vague and—when applied to non-governmental persons, as in this instance—subject to legitimate challenge on constitutional grounds. By contrast, the provision of the law (Section 798) bearing on the *Times*'s behavior is a model of clarity, and stands constitutionally unchallenged and unchallengeable. In 1950, when it was enacted as an amendment to the Espionage Act, Section 798 was endorsed by the American Society of Newspapers Editors (of which ranking *Times* editors were active members). As the investigation of the NSA leak continues, my hope is that the glaring discrepancy between the handling of these two cases will be brought to light.

Along with a number of other correspondents, Mr. Aftergood suggests that only minimal damage was done by disclosure of the NSA program. Even before the *Times* story appeared, so the argument goes, al-Qaeda operatives had cause to believe that their telephone and email messages were not secure, and they refrained from communicating through such channels. All the *New York Times* did, therefore, was to confirm a fact already widely known, without interfering with actual counterterrorism operations.

There is a certain surface plausibility to this contention. Beneath the surface, however, it ignores both logic and basic facts. Of course, my critics are no more privy than I am to the actual workings of the NSA program, and so we cannot confidently judge the actual costs of the *New York Times*'s disclosure. But the public statements of those who *are* privy to such knowledge are not reassuring. Jane Harman, the ranking *Democratic* member of the House Intelligence Committee, has said that the leak "damaged critical intel-

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ligence capabilities." None of my correspondents offers the slightest reason to doubt her words.

As the recent Madrid and London subway bombings make plain, to finance, plan, and carry out even a relatively modest terrorist operation requires an extensive exchange of information. And a moment's thought makes clear that there are not many available channels in which such an exchange can occur. Smoke signals from mountaintop to cave might suffice in a place like Afghanistan, but they would hardly work well in planning an operation to hit New York City out of Waziristan.

Couriers present a different set of problems; they are typically much too slow and run great risks when crossing international borders. The global postal system is also slow, unreliable, and vulnerable to interception. In terms of speed, clarity, reliability, and security, telephone and email simply cannot be surpassed. This explains why, even after September 11, al-Qaeda operatives are known to have continued talking on open lines. Determined to mount further coordinated actions, they have had little choice.

The *New York Times*, in stating that the NSA program "led investigators to only a *few potential terrorists in the country* whom they did not know about from other sources" (emphasis added), has unwittingly made a devastating admission about the harm it may have inflicted on our country's security. Three of the four planes hijacked on September 11 were commandeered by only five men; one was commandeered by four. Together, these "few" terrorists caused massive destruction and took some 3,000 lives. If, in the post-September 11 era, the NSA surveillance program enabled our government to uncover even a "few" potential terrorists in the U.S., it was doing its job, doing it well, and, depending on who exactly these few potential terrorists were, doing it perhaps spectacularly well.

If, moreover, the *New York Times* story of December 16, 2005 did not completely compromise the NSA program, the details that the paper subsequently published, the even fuller elaboration in James Risen's book, and the attendant hailstorm of publicity effectively finished the job. Al-Qaeda operatives were put on notice not merely that they risked having their international communications intercepted but that interception was a near certainty. Not long after that revelation, in all likelihood, such communications ceased. Just as the disclosures undoubtedly threw a wrench into the work of terrorist planners, they threw an even larger wrench into our efforts to uncover their plots.

Compounding this damage is harm of a more general sort. In waging the war on terrorism, the U.S. depends heavily on cooperation with the intelligence agencies of allied countries. When our own intelligence services, including the NSA, the most secretive branch of all, demonstrate that that they are unable to keep shared information under wraps, international cooperation dries up. According to Porter Goss, director of the CIA in this period, "Too many of my counterparts from other countries have told me, 'You Americans can't keep a secret'. . . and some of these critical partners have even informed the CIA that they are reconsidering their participation in some of our most important antiterrorism ventures."

If counterterrorism were a parlor game—and that is how, in their recent cavalier treatment of sensitive intelligence secrets, the *Washington Post* and the *New York Times* seem to regard it—Goss's fretting could be easily dismissed. But every American was made aware on September 11 of the price of an intelligence shortfall. This is no game, but a matter of life and death.

Blair's Foreign Policy

TO THE EDITOR:

In "Britain's Neoconservative Moment" [March], Daniel Johnson's comments about my book, *Anti-Totalitarianism: The Left-Wing Case for a Neoconservative Foreign Policy*, are so generous that I feel churlish in taking issue with the main point of his article. But I do not believe there is any serious prospect of a neoconservative movement in Great Britain comparable to the one that energized the Reagan administration or the post-9/11 foreign policies of the Bush administration. Nor do I believe it would necessarily be a good thing if there were.

My own advocacy of the neoconservative stance is, as Mr. Johnson notes, limited to its foreign-policy critique—that is, to its recognition of the weaknesses of a rules-based system of international norms against autocratic states that refuse to be bound by those norms. "Neoconservatism" is scarcely the ideal label for a liberal-democratic internationalism tempered by this view, but it is the term of abuse continually leveled at supporters of Tony Blair's interventionist policies. We might as well accept a derogatory name and make a virtue of it, much as the early Methodists (or indeed the original neoconservatives) did. As Charles Krauthammer has noted in COMMENTARY, neoconservative foreign policy "is no longer tethered to its own ideological history and paternity."

Krauthammer had in mind specifically those foreign-policy realists who have come to see the intimate connection between national security and the overthrow of tyranny. But the point applies also to those on the Left who rue the indifference of cold-war realpolitik to the plight of small nations like East Timor and Tibet, deprecate the willingness of conservative governments in the 1990's to acquiesce in Serbian aggression in the Balkans, and welcome America's current stress, in President Bush's words, on "defend[ing] the peace by fighting terrorists and tyrants" and "extend[ing] the peace by encouraging free and open societies on every continent."

The problem in England, however, is that these principles have become a political liability for Tony Blair. This is unwarranted and worrying. The weakness in Blair's foreign policy—a lack of a sense of priorities, comparable to his neglect of the fact that in domestic policy not all desirable goals are compatible—is less important than the central point the prime minister has got-

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ten right. When the U.S. was attacked on 9/11, the proper response was to treat it not as a problem of law enforcement but as an act of war perpetrated by an aggressive totalitarianism with recognizable antecedents in 20th-century Europe.

If, despite the mismanagement and unpopularity of the Iraq war, the anti-totalitarian impulse is to remain central to British policy, it will need to be advanced by a political coalition as extensive and heterogeneous as the one that opposed Soviet Communism. That will not happen if (as with the American brand of neoconservatism) anti-totalitarianism in foreign policy is yoked to a critique of cultural relativism and the welfare state at home.

There are independent grounds for believing that the permissive society has been a net gain for civilized values, and that shrinking public services is neither possible nor desirable. But there is also an important pragmatic consideration for staying clear of American-style domestic neoconservatism: as the Conservative party has belatedly realized, political debate in the United Kingdom will marginalize those arguments.

The fundamental distinction in foreign policy today is between the advocates of openness—with the implication that we cannot overlook aggressive threats to liberal values from our declared enemies—and realists who advance an impossibly narrow conception of the national interest in informal alliance with an isolationist Left. Neoconservatism has a role in that debate, but also a limitation.

OLIVER KAMM
London, England

TO THE EDITOR:

It was with a mixture of keen interest and concern that I read Daniel Johnson's article on "Britain's Neoconservative Moment." The former stemmed from the fact that the organization I helped to found and now direct, the Henry Jackson Society, is at the vanguard of the nascent movement that Mr. Johnson describes. The society is, as he writes, "an umbrella organization for British Atlanticists and hawkish idealists of the Left and the Right." My concern derived from Mr. Johnson's alarmist subtext that the state of British politics today is such that proponents of interventionism here may require American bolstering, lest "the next generation of American leaders and thinkers [have] to ask itself who lost Britain."

One of the prime reasons for the creation of the Henry Jackson Society was the belief that, given Britain's own rich history in the field, there is a specific British contribution to be made on behalf of the interventionist viewpoint in foreign policy. Mr. Johnson himself acknowledges this by citing the MP Michael Gove, who argues that national self-preservation and the spreading of liberalism were guiding motives for the interventionist foreign policies of figures as diverse as Canning, Palmerston, and Churchill. As the Henry Jackson Society's rise to public prominence and its garnering of support from across the political spectrum demonstrate, neoconservatism and muscular liberalism are integral parts of British tradition, history, and foreign-policy practice, rather than alien creeds transported wholesale from across the Atlantic.

If further proof were required of the historical influence of the interventionist imperative within Britain, next year will mark the 200th anniversary of William Wilberforce's successful campaign to abolish the slave trade within the British Empire. Britain's willingness to interfere with the slave trade, irrespective of territorial boundaries, was of course an early example of an ethical foreign policy, one driven, interestingly enough, by public pressure. The Henry Jackson Society's forthcoming foreign-policy manifesto, *The British Moment: The Case for Democratic Geopolitics in the 21st Century*, aims to tap into this same popular feeling.

That this feeling still exists today is self-evident, and makes Mr. Johnson's arguments seem defeatist in nature. How else has Tony Blair been able to avoid losing the confidence of the country—as opposed to that of the left-wingers in his own party—during his various overseas adventures? Why is it that his presumptive heir, Chancellor of the Exchequer Gordon Brown, can echo Mr. Blair's foreign-policy approach—thereby inciting those very same left-wingers—and still expect to succeed to his party's leadership? And how else could David Cameron, the new leader of the Conservative party, surround himself with a coterie of neoconservative supporters without risking a backlash from those responsible for the unprincipled foreign policy of Britain's last Conservative government?

As Mr. Johnson reports, British interventionists are split as to whether neoconservatism's domestic agenda has a relevance to Britain. Our organization takes no rigid, corporate view on the subject, believing that it is our role to unite rather than divide opinion. But it is notable that the attitude of bipartisan agreement on the interventionist agenda that we have sought to foster—and that "Scoop" Jackson deemed "too important to be left to petty partisan consideration"—remains solid, particularly with regard to Iran.

The next generation of American leaders and thinkers can therefore rest assured: while we welcome their support and partnership wholeheartedly, none need lament "Who lost Britain?" so long as the Henry Jackson Society and similar homegrown British advocates continue to fight the just fight.

ALAN MENDOZA
Henry Jackson Society
London, England

DANIEL JOHNSON writes:

I am grateful to Oliver Kamm and Andrew Mendoza for their measured criticisms. I agree with Mr. Kamm that the likelihood is small that a powerful British neoconservative movement is about to emerge. But thereafter we part company. He thinks that such a movement would not necessarily be a good thing, because its domestic critique of cultural relativism and the welfare state might hinder the emergence of a broad, heterogeneous coalition like that of anti-Communism. I believe, to the contrary, that in order to re-create such a broad coalition we need to reaffirm the values of our Judeo-Christian civilization. It was this civilization that

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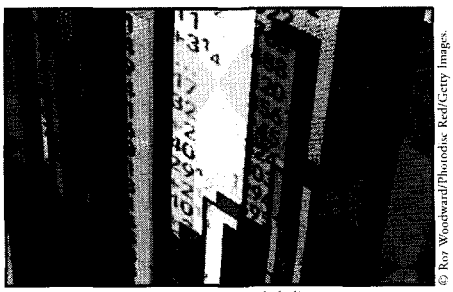

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resisted and defeated the Nazis and that survived and eventually overcame Soviet Communism. Without it, I do not see how Europe can hope to resist that new form of political religion we call Islamism.

There is no reason, at least in principle, why a politician of the Left should not espouse Judeo-Christian values as vigorously as one of the Right. Nor have Conservatives historically enjoyed a monopoly on the kind of interventionist foreign policy that now goes under the banner of neoconservatism. But there is undoubtedly a tendency at present for the active promotion of democracy abroad to be associated with conservative politics. This was also true during the cold war, despite the undoubted significance of liberal anti-Communism in its early phase.

What Mr. Kamm rather quaintly calls the "permissive society" created a moral and intellectual crisis of relativism from which Western liberalism has still not recovered, and which has left it ill-equipped to resist the latest, Islamist manifestation of totalitarianism. One might almost say that a neoconservative today is a liberal who has been bombed. Mr. Kamm believes that the arguments of neoconservatives have been marginalized in Britain. I would say, rather, that they have never been properly tried. But this is an issue on which supporters of an interventionist, "neoconservative" foreign policy can agree to disagree.

Alan Mendoza chides me for the opposite failing: namely, the "defeatist" argument that interventionism in Britain rests on relatively weak foundations, and may require support from the United States. He points out that Tony Blair has been able to carry the British people, and that both his heir apparent in Labor, Gordon Brown, and his latest Tory opponent, David Cameron, share his foreign-policy outlook. Well, we shall see about that. Right now, Blair is virtually the only leading politician, not only in Britain but in all of Europe, who is prepared to make the case for a vigorous prosecution of the war on terror, even if it means taking on terror-sponsoring states like Iran. Both Brown and Cameron have yet to prove themselves under fire.

While I have great respect for Mr. Mendoza's admirable Henry Jackson Society, it is by no means a power in the land. My point about American support was illustrated recently when Condoleezza Rice paid a brief visit to Britain this spring. Her eloquent advocacy made a striking impact, but it will require a much more concerted effort by the Bush administration to counteract the hostility of the British journalistic and political establishment. I am not defeatist, but I plead guilty to the charge of alarmism. There is plenty going on in Britain that Americans should be alarmed about.

The Museum World

TO THE EDITOR:

In his article, "Art for Sale" [March], Michael J. Lewis makes important points about some of the problems plaguing today's art museums, like the willingness to "deaccession" or sell off works to raise funds, and the rush to expand regardless of the consequences. He is also right to decry the uprooting of the Barnes Foundation collection. But I would question some of his other criticisms.

Mr. Lewis begins his polemic by condemning the Brooklyn Museum's handling of the 1999 *Sensation* exhibition of the Saatchi collection (while giving a pass to Mayor Rudolph Giuliani for violating the museum's First Amendment rights). He suggests, invoking the name of P.T. Barnum, that museums are becoming circus-like. A similar charge was leveled at the London gallery-owner William Bullock for his promotion of an 1820 exhibition of Géricault's *Raft of the Medusa*. Bullock did indeed play up the painting's most sensational aspects, but his manner of display was so superior to that of the 1819 Salon in Paris that it spurred a reassessment of the painting after the negative reception it had received there. In early-19th-century London as in late-20th-century New York, what at first shocked about an art exhibition later became secondary to the importance of its message.

Marion True, a curator at the Getty Museum who is on trial in Italy for participating in the smuggling of antiquities, is another of Mr. Lewis's targets. "There is no question that [she] was involved," he writes, "only about how deeply and actively." Like so many others, Mr. Lewis ignores the fact that a museum curator can only suggest the acquisition of an object, which then has to be okayed by the director and the board. Barry Munitz, who recently resigned his position as president of the Getty under nebulous circumstances, chose to make True the scapegoat. Ironically, while True has been excoriated by the press, she was praised by Malcolm Bell III, vice president of the Archaeological Institute of America, for devising one of the strongest policies of any major American museum for ensuring the proper acquisition of antiquities.

As for Mr. Lewis's treatment of the Guggenheim's "flamboyant" director Thomas Krens, whatever the problems raised by Krens's concept of museum franchising, he at least deserves credit for his vision of a new kind of museum that updates the 19th-century model. Why should museums built in 1830 like Germany's Altes and Glypothek be the canonical models for museums in the 21st century, as Mr. Lewis would have it? Although, as he points out, the purpose of these early museums was primarily didactic, this was a very different intention from what the art in them was originally made for.

Before the advent of public museums, even religious and political art was a kind of serious entertainment. As I argue in the new, revised edition of my book, *Towards a New Museum*, princely collectors lived with their art; the public enjoyed it in churches, civic buildings, and lively processions. Because museums removed art from these everyday settings, they have been equated from their inception with mausoleums. Presenting art in an entertaining environment is not a novelty; it is a return to an attitude that predates the invention of museums. Museums have

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not ceased to instruct—witness the ubiquitous wall labels and "acoustiguides"—but adding elements like contextual displays and frequent views to the exterior can make their art more meaningful for many visitors.

I wholeheartedly agree with Mr. Lewis that an overemphasis on entertainment has its downsides. One of the biggest is the effort of major museums to move a maximum number of visitors through their galleries in a minimum amount of time, producing what Rem Koolhaas aptly describes as "an experience of body parts." But a touch of Barnum can also remove art from the mausoleum and restore it to a lived environment.

VICTORIA NEWHOUSE
New York City

TO THE EDITOR:

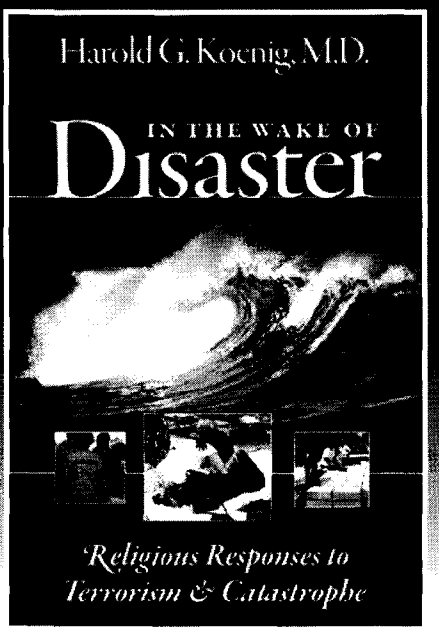
Thank you for Michael J. Lewis's article on the state of contemporary museums. I am pleased to see from his discussion of *Whose Muse? Art Museums and the Public Trust* (2003) that the essays in that volume (which I edited) remain relevant and of interest. We who work in museums should always remember that museums are charities held in trust. Nothing we do should ever put at risk the public's trust in our motives or actions.

Since we published our book three years ago, a few museums have continued to flirt with for-profit initiatives, like global franchising or partnering with commercial entities to present works from their collections as exhibitions in Las Vegas casinos. Mr. Lewis is right to be concerned with such trends, but these remain minority activities. A greater threat to the public's regard for museums is the continued picture in the media of museums as voracious acquisitors of ill-gotten goods—of works illegally removed from archaeological sites or illegally exported from source countries. This is an unfair characterization, perpetuated by the media on the basis of only a very few examples.

At a time when the world is increasingly divided into smaller and smaller nation states separated by false ideologies of difference, museums' collections provide evidence that cultures have always been in contact with each other, have always overlapped, and have much more in common than we are often led to believe. But nationalist cultural policies are limiting the potential for museums to contribute to the world's cultural commons. Countries are increasingly retentionist, preventing "cultural property"—always a political construct, what one state claims as its property and no one else's—from being exported and shared with the rest of the world. These policies have encouraged the emergence of a black market. But contrary to popular notions, museums are actually acquiring fewer and fewer objects that may be designated another country's "cultural property." Who, then, is buying these works? We can only assume private collectors—clearly at the expense of the viewing public.

We have to find a way to broaden access to the world's shared artistic legacy. Museums do not own their collections; they preserve and keep them for the sake of the public. It is not a matter of property but of custodianship. Today, more than 140 of the 191 mem-

If long-term recovery depends upon spiritual healing first, why aren't faith-based efforts better utilized?



When disaster strikes, the faith community is often the first to respond. Most recently, as hurricane Katrina roared ashore and as FEMA was still figuring out what to do, religious organizations were already providing immediate assistance to victims. But it clearly wasn't enough — and the overwhelming question is why the faith-based efforts weren't better integrated into the official response.

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ber states in the United Nations have retentionist laws restricting trade in their "cultural property." This is the greatest challenge museums face today.

JAMES CUNO
Art Institute of Chicago
Chicago, Illinois

MICHAEL J. LEWIS writes:

If I can paraphrase the comments of James Cuno and Victoria Newhouse, it is that I have exaggerated the state of affairs with my anecdotal evidence—which dealt with the smuggling of antiquities, the feckless sale of objects in collections, the unfortunate application of business models to the operation of cultural institutions, and so on.

For Mr. Cuno, such practices—deplorable as they may be—remain "minority activities" and do not amount to a collective crisis. His confidence is somewhat surprising, since the symposium that led to the publication of his *Whose Muse? Art Museums and the Public Trust* was explicitly convened to address just such a crisis. In view of what has transpired in the museum world during the three years since that book appeared, I am not sure why he is more buoyant today than then.

Victoria Newhouse argues that crass commercial motives have always accompanied the public display of art, and their effects are as likely to be positive as negative. She cites Géricault to show that a shocking exhibition might lead in time to a richer understanding of art, and suggests that this might be the case with the Brooklyn Museum's notorious *Sensation* exhibition.

That show is remembered now, if at all, for its elephant-dung-bespattered Madonna, but its most discreditable aspect was its exploitation of the prestige of a public museum to inflate the commercial value of a private collection. Instead of addressing the recent historical developments that could make such a thing possible, Victoria Newhouse chides me for "giving a pass to Mayor Rudolph Giuliani for violating the museum's First Amendment rights." But it is a leap of logic indeed to equate the withdrawal of a public subsidy with censorship; surely she sees that one man's right of free speech does not extend to the right to make another man pay for his soapbox. Clearly we have a disagreement over the meaning we assign to the same evidence.

I continue to believe that all is not well in American art museums. But the situation is better for the efforts of James Cuno and Victoria Newhouse, who have long been thoughtful defenders of what is best in the museum world.

International Law

TO THE EDITOR:

At the heart of Andrew C. McCarthy's "International Law v. United States" [February] is a series of dichotomies: Americans, he suggests, can assert the right to self-determination through representative government *or* follow transnational elites who impose legal duties from abroad. We can take pride in a noble particularism, *or* we can join the self-deluded who fancy themselves citizens of the "so-called international community." We can stand by our constitutional traditions, venerable and pure, *or* we can suffer their adulteration by Europhiles peddling international and foreign law.

But we do not live in a world of simple dichotomies. Nor did those who wrote and ratified our Constitution. Though the framers rejected much of the Old World, they continued to borrow from it. They were bold experimenters, but they and early American jurists readily incorporated into the American legal system widely shared understandings about the nature of law, sovereignty, and territoriality. These understandings, sometimes articulated and sometimes not, were drawn from English common law, natural law, classical antiquity, European legal systems, and the law of nations. From the founding to the present, American law has always drawn from and contributed to the wider legal world.

The relationship between international law and our Constitution is not superficial. From the 18th-century law of nations came pervasive conceptions of sovereignty, comity, and reciprocity. In the libraries of Federalists and anti-Federalists were well-thumbed copies of Blackstone, Grotius, Huber, and Vattel. These authors and the established practices of European states influenced not only the drafting of Article I and its reference to the law of nations but other constitutional provisions: the Due Process Clause, the Full Faith and Credit Clause, Article III's grant of jurisdiction to federal courts. The international legal obligations of a young country in need of trade and allies assumed special importance to the authors of *The Federalist* and to the first Congress.

This cross-fertilization did not end in 1789. The list of American judges who have looked to international and comparative law in interpreting our own statutes and constitutional provisions is a Who's Who of great jurists, beginning with John Marshall, Joseph Story, and James Kent. Story in particular was prodigious in bringing European principles of private international law to the U.S. His *Commentaries on the Conflict of Laws: Foreign and Domestic* (1834) greatly influenced how American courts in the 19th century exercised jurisdiction, both in international cases and purely domestic ones. Early Supreme Court cases arising from transnational controversies—*Charming Betsy* (1804), *U.S. v. Smith* (1820), *Antelope* (1825)—became important precedents on fundamental aspects of the U.S. legal system: interstate extradition, limits on legislative power, statutory construction.

The list of "importers" of international and foreign law also includes Oliver Wendell Holmes and Learned Hand. Both looked to international law as an aid in interpreting congressional intent and the geographic reach of American statutes. In *American Banana* (1909), Holmes concluded that U.S. antitrust laws did not apply to foreign cartels because of a global consensus as to limits on the extraterritorial application of a country's laws. Four decades later, in a landmark departure from Holmes's precedent, Hand applied a similar interpretive approach: "We are not to read general words, such as those in [the Sherman]

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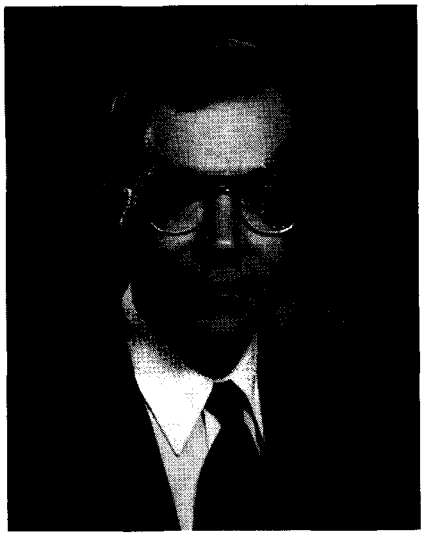
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Act, without regard to the limitations customarily observed by nations upon the exercise of their powers."

Other importers of international law included Justices Benjamin Cardozo, Robert Jackson, and John Harlan II. In a New York Court of Appeals case, Cardozo, working from Marshall's *Antelope* opinion, concluded that international law shed light on one state's leeway in fulfilling the constitutional duty to apply the laws of another. Jackson's approach to comity and his studied weighing of competing sovereign contacts in *Lauritzen* v. *Larsen* (1953), an international maritime case, greatly influenced subsequent jurisprudence on how courts should choose the applicable law in wholly domestic disputes. And in *Sabbatino* (1964), Justice Harlan considered the extent to which the Act of State Doctrine had deep roots in international law before going on to transform the doctrine in ways that have become important to domestic facets of federalism and separation of powers.

In short, those today who pause to consider how other legal systems confront complex issues are not doing something "downright unthinkable," as Mr. McCarthy would have it. They are tracking some very giant footsteps.

PAUL R. DUBINSKY
Wayne State University
Law School
Detroit, Michigan

ANDREW C. MCCARTHY writes:

Paul Dubinsky's stage-setting "dichotomies" hold that Americans can either side with me by persevering in constitutional self-government or follow transnational elites and "suffer [the] adulteration" of their traditions. But these are false dichotomies. I never claimed that Americans may not follow transnational progressives or even alter our fundamental law. I happen to think this would not be wise, but the point of my article was that there are legitimate legal processes for doing so, and that these are not being followed.

America could become France tomorrow. If it did so by way of its own choices and in compliance with the Constitution's requirements, I would not have a thing to complain about, regardless of how daft I found such a transformation. In his paean to the glories of international progressivism, Mr. Dubinsky misleadingly suggests that its incremental grip on our lives is simply our "legal system" in operation—"system" being the benign substitute for "choice." But Mr. Dubinsky's gospel is being spread by stealth and judicial fiat rather than by democratic persuasion.

No one would dispute that the framers borrowed from a wide variety of international sources. But ultimately, their handiwork was democratically ratified. Nor have I suggested that when the application of international law is indicated—and the Constitution expressly contemplates its application—judges should shun it. Mr. Dubinsky points to some such judicial decisions and intimates that they legitimize the whole internationalist project. But when international law has been made pertinent by the political process, that is democracy in action, not a license for allowing judges to decide when foreign pieties should trump self-determination.

In any event, my essay was about nongovernmental organizations and other transnational progressives using their own dubious constructions of international law and human-rights law to restrict or reverse democratic choices, and about courts using foreign law to divine the meaning of our constitutional provisions. Concerning these matters, Mr. Dubinsky has virtually nothing to say.

After the Summer of Love

TO THE EDITOR:

Herbert Gold's "Remembrance of Cultural Revolutions Past" [March] overwhelmed me with memories. He certainly brought to life the sounds, smells, styles, craziness, and vacuity of the San Francisco that my husband and I knew in the early 1970's. I don't know how many times I had to listen to mercilessly humorless "politicos" preach revolution or analyze minute differences among uniformly leftist positions, or hear stoned-out hippies (originally distinct from the politicos) prate about "love and peace."

For me, Mr. Gold's reminiscence was especially powerful because I was somewhat friendly with his wife Melissa at exactly the time he writes about, when they were breaking up. Mr. Gold blames the breakup of his marriage on the times. I must say that, to me, Melissa did not seem a countercultural type. She was a lovely, very blueblood Wasp, somewhat reserved and very devoted to her three children whom she spoke about a great deal. She appeared to be very responsible. Though only a year older than I, she seemed from a different generation, a woman already with children and an older husband, more established in life than any of our friends.

But Mr. Gold reminds us of how powerful was the lure of the counterculture. People were seduced by, or forced into, the heady freedom that came with violating conventional morality. No insult was worse than to be called "straight," "bourgeois," or "uptight." I knew many couples who tried to banish jealousy or experimented with open relationships; someone was always shattered, even if everyone denied it. Divorces like the Golds' littered the landscape. If you believed in being faithful, you were the one on the defensive. It was easy to lose your moorings.

As Mr. Gold at least indirectly admits, it was rather unseemly for older people like himself to be acting like youngsters in what was, after all, a youth movement, and he thus had his own share of complicity in Melissa's experimentation. Those under the age of thirty and without grown-up commitments could afford to be freer. To my mind, the most glaring feature of the time was less the rise of the youth cult than the disappearance of adulthood. Mr. Gold captures that beautifully.

Mr. Gold's wistful nostalgia for his lost love and for the undeniable exuberance of that era, coupled with his keen awareness of its silliness and its tawdry endings, made me very sad. I cannot help thinking about

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what subsequently happened to Melissa herself, a swan who wafted into his life, loved him, seemed ready to nest permanently, and then seemed simply to sail away with her brood when the winds changed. Although Mr. Gold does not say so in his memoir, what followed for Melissa were two more husbands, and then death in a helicopter crash when she was only forty-seven.

ROBERTA P. SEID
Santa Monica, California

HERBERT GOLD writes:

I am moved by Roberta P. Seid's eloquent letter, evoking her own remembrance of a strange period in the life of San Francisco and America, with its reverberations, for both good and bad, that still continue. I did not mean to suggest that Melissa, my former wife, and I were victims of "the times." What I did and what that remarkable woman did was consistent with our characters, although certainly influenced by a moment when it seemed that all barriers should go down.

Melissa's death in a helicopter during a storm was a tragedy for our children, for her many friends, and for the former husband who still treasures her memory.

Job Talk

TO THE EDITOR:

In his fair-minded and insightful (and therefore personally gratifying) review of my book *The Case for Goliath: How America Acts as the World's Government in the 21st Century* [March], Gary Rosen writes that I "failed to win a big job in the Clinton administration in 1992." For the record, in January 1993, I was offered the position of director of policy planning at the Department of State, which I declined.

MICHAEL MANDELBAUM
Paul H. Nitze School of International Studies
Johns Hopkins University
Washington, D.C.

GARY ROSEN writes:

My thanks to Michael Mandelbaum for the clarification. I should have written that he "failed to *take* a big job in the Clinton administration." But my basic point remains: even at that early stage, it was evident to Mr. Mandelbaum that his brand of realism was not a comfortable fit for the Clinton foreign-policy team.

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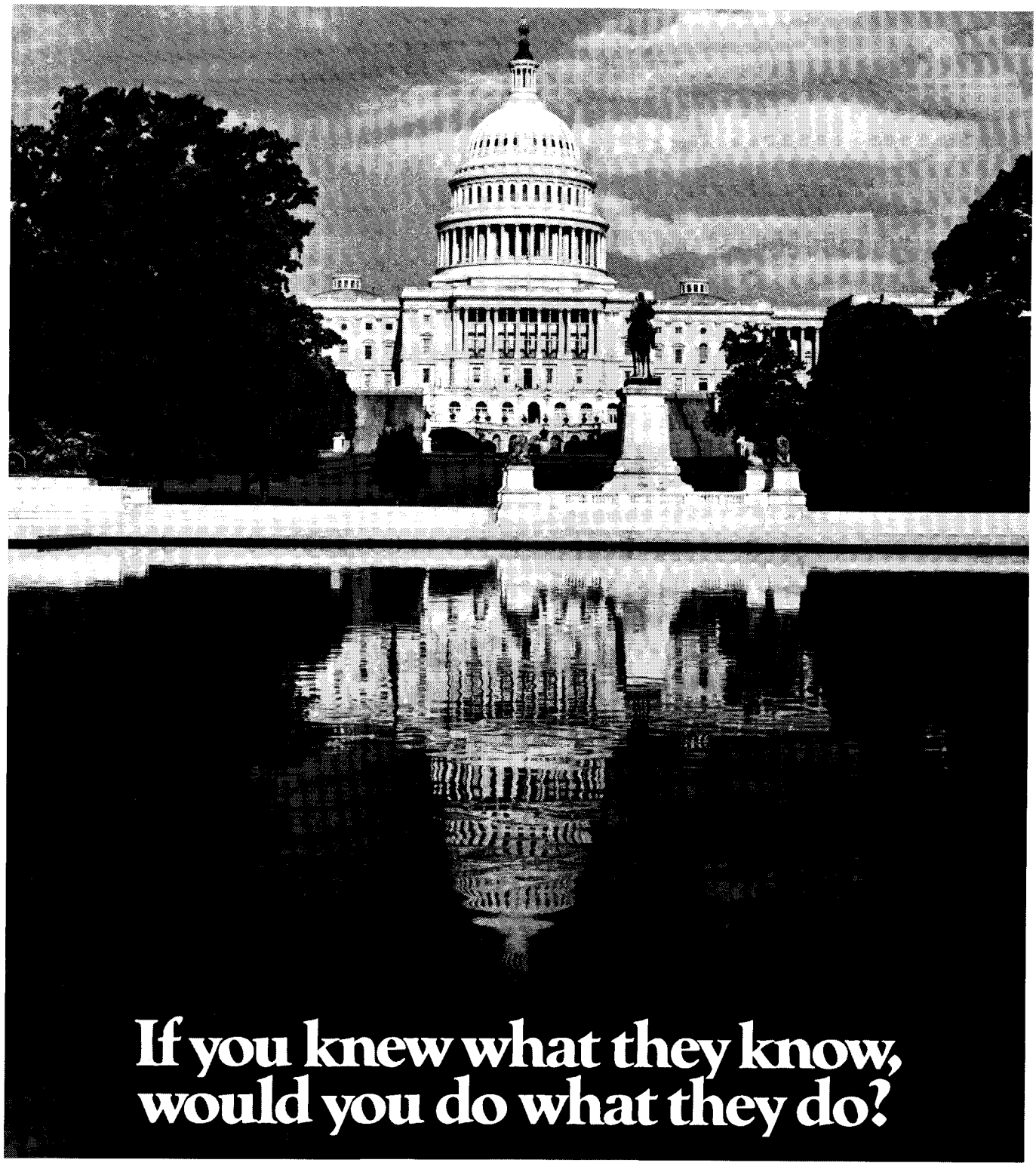

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Commentary
June 2006

The Real Iraq

Amir Taheri

SPENDING TIME in the United States after a tour of Iraq can be a disorienting experience these days. Within hours of arriving here, as I can attest from a recent visit, one is confronted with an image of Iraq that is unrecognizable. It is created in several overlapping ways: through television footage showing the charred remains of vehicles used in suicide attacks, surrounded by wailing women in black and grim-looking men carrying coffins; by armchair strategists and political gurus predicting further doom or pontificating about how the war should have been fought in the first place; by authors of instant-history books making their rounds to dissect the various "fundamental mistakes" committed by the Bush administration; and by reporters, cocooned in hotels in Baghdad, explaining the "carnage" and "chaos" in the streets as signs of the country's "impending" or "undeclared" civil war. Add to all this the day's alleged scandal or revelation—an outed CIA operative, a reportedly doctored intelligence report, a leaked pessimistic assessment—and it is no wonder the American public registers disillusion with Iraq and everyone who embroiled the U.S. in its troubles.

It would be hard indeed for the average interested citizen to find out on his own just how grossly this image distorts the realities of present-day Iraq. Part of the problem, faced by even the most well-meaning news organizations, is the difficulty of covering so large and complex a subject; naturally, in such circumstances, sensational items rise to the top. But even ostensibly more objective efforts, like the Brookings Institution's much-cited *Iraq Index* with its constantly updated array of security, economic, and public-opinion indicators, tell us little about the actual feel of the country on the ground.

To make matters worse, many of the newsmen, pundits, and commentators on whom American viewers and readers rely to describe the situation have been contaminated by the increasing bitterness of American politics. Clearly there are those in the media and the think tanks who wish the Iraq enterprise to end in tragedy, as a just comeuppance for George W. Bush. Others, prompted by noble sentiment, so abhor the idea of war that they would banish it from human discourse before admitting that, in some circumstances, military power can be used in support of a good cause. But whatever the reason, the half-truths and outright misinformation that now function as conventional wisdom have gravely disserved the American people.

For someone like myself who has spent considerable time in Iraq—a country I first visited in 1968—current reality there is, nevertheless, very different from this conventional wisdom, and so are the prospects for Iraq's future. It helps to know where to look, what sources to trust, and how to

AMIR TAHERI, *formerly the executive editor of* Kayhan, *Iran's largest daily newspaper; is the author of ten books and a frequent contributor to numerous publications in the Middle East and Europe. His work appears regularly in the* New York Post.

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evaluate the present moment against the background of Iraqi and Middle Eastern history.

SINCE MY first encounter with Iraq almost 40 years ago, I have relied on several broad measures of social and economic health to assess the country's condition. Through good times and bad, these signs have proved remarkably accurate—as accurate, that is, as is possible in human affairs. For some time now, all have been pointing in an unequivocally positive direction.

The first sign is refugees. When things have been truly desperate in Iraq—in 1959, 1969, 1971, 1973, 1980, 1988, and 1990—long queues of Iraqis have formed at the Turkish and Iranian frontiers, hoping to escape. In 1973, for example, when Saddam Hussein decided to expel all those whose ancestors had not been Ottoman citizens before Iraq's creation as a state, some 1.2 million Iraqis left their homes in the space of just six weeks. This was not the temporary exile of a small group of middle-class professionals and intellectuals, which is a common enough phenomenon in most Arab countries. Rather, it was a departure *en masse*, affecting people both in small villages and in big cities, and it was a scene regularly repeated under Saddam Hussein.

Since the toppling of Saddam in 2003, this is one highly damaging image we have not seen on our television sets—and we can be sure that we *would* be seeing it if it were there to be shown. To the contrary, Iraqis, far from fleeing, have been returning home. By the end of 2005, in the most conservative estimate, the number of returnees topped the 1.2-million mark. Many of the camps set up for fleeing Iraqis in Turkey, Iran, and Saudi Arabia since 1959 have now closed down. The oldest such center, at Ashrafiayh in southwest Iran, was formally shut when its last Iraqi guests returned home in 2004.

A second dependable sign likewise concerns human movement, but of a different kind. This is the flow of religious pilgrims to the Shiite shrines in Karbala and Najaf. Whenever things start to go badly in Iraq, this stream is reduced to a trickle and then it dries up completely. From 1991 (when Saddam Hussein massacred Shiites involved in a revolt against him) to 2003, there were scarcely any pilgrims to these cities. Since Saddam's fall, they have been flooded with visitors. In 2005, the holy sites received an estimated 12 million pilgrims, making them the most visited spots in the entire Muslim world, ahead of both Mecca and Medina.

Over 3,000 Iraqi clerics have also returned from exile, and Shiite seminaries, which just a few years ago held no more than a few dozen pupils, now boast over 15,000 from 40 different countries. This is because Najaf, the oldest center of Shiite scholarship, is once again able to offer an alternative to Qom, the Iranian "holy city" where a radical and highly politicized version of Shiism is taught. Those wishing to pursue the study of more traditional and quietist forms of Shiism now go to Iraq where, unlike in Iran, the seminaries are not controlled by the government and its secret police.

A third sign, this one of the hard economic variety, is the value of the Iraqi dinar, especially as compared with the region's other major currencies. In the final years of Saddam Hussein's rule, the Iraqi dinar was in free fall; after 1995, it was no longer even traded in Iran and Kuwait. By contrast, the new dinar, introduced early in 2004, is doing well against both the Kuwaiti dinar and the Iranian rial, having risen by 17 percent against the former and by 23 percent against the latter. Although it is still impossible to fix its value against a basket of international currencies, the new Iraqi dinar has done well against the U.S. dollar, increasing in value by almost 18 percent between August 2004 and August 2005. The overwhelming majority of Iraqis, and millions of Iranians and Kuwaitis, now treat it as a safe and solid medium of exchange

My fourth time-tested sign is the level of activity by small and medium-sized businesses. In the past, whenever things have gone downhill in Iraq, large numbers of such enterprises have simply closed down, with the country's most capable entrepreneurs decamping to Jordan, Syria, Saudi Arabia, the Persian Gulf states, Turkey, Iran, and even Europe and North America. Since liberation, however, Iraq has witnessed a private-sector boom, especially among small and medium-sized businesses.

According to the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank, as well as numerous private studies, the Iraqi economy has been doing better than any other in the region. The country's gross domestic product rose to almost $90 billion in 2004 (the latest year for which figures are available), more than double the output for 2003, and its real growth rate, as estimated by the IMF, was 52.3 per cent. In that same period, exports increased by more than $3 billion, while the inflation rate fell to 25.4 percent, down from 70 percent in 2002. The unemployment rate was halved, from 60 percent to 30 percent.

Related to this is the level of agricultural activity. Between 1991 and 2003, the country's farm sector experienced unprecedented decline, in the end leaving almost the entire nation dependent on rations

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distributed by the United Nations under Oil-for-Food. In the past two years, by contrast, Iraqi agriculture has undergone an equally unprecedented revival. Iraq now exports foodstuffs to neighboring countries, something that has not happened since the 1950's. Much of the upturn is due to smallholders who, shaking off the collectivist system imposed by the Baathists, have retaken control of land that was confiscated decades ago by the state.

Finally, one of the surest indices of the health of Iraqi society has always been its readiness to talk to the outside world. Iraqis are a verbalizing people; when they fall silent, life is incontrovertibly becoming hard for them. There have been times, indeed, when one could find scarcely a single Iraqi, whether in Iraq or abroad, prepared to express an opinion on anything remotely political. This is what Kanan Makiya meant when he described Saddam Hussein's regime as a "republic of fear."

Today, again by way of dramatic contrast, Iraqis are voluble to a fault. Talk radio, television talk-shows, and Internet blogs are all the rage, while heated debate is the order of the day in shops, teahouses, bazaars, mosques, offices, and private homes. A "catharsis" is how Luay Abdulilah, the Iraqi short-story writer and diarist, describes it. "This is one way of taking revenge against decades of deadly silence." Moreover, a vast network of independent media has emerged in Iraq, including over 100 privately-owned newspapers and magazines and more than two dozen radio and television stations. To anyone familiar with the state of the media in the Arab world, it is a truism that Iraq today is the place where freedom of expression is most effectively exercised.

That an experienced observer of Iraq with a sense of history can point to so many positive factors in the country's present condition will not do much, of course, to sway the more determined critics of the U.S. intervention there. They might even agree that the images fed to the American public show only part of the picture, and that the news from Iraq is not uniformly bad. But the root of their opposition runs deeper, to political fundamentals.

Their critique can be summarized in the aphorism that "democracy cannot be imposed by force." It is a view that can be found among the more sophisticated elements on the Left and, increasingly, among dissenters on the Right, from Senator Chuck Hagel of Nebraska to the ex-neoconservative Francis Fukuyama. As Senator Hagel puts it, "You cannot in my opinion just impose a democratic form of government on a country with no history and no culture and no tradition of democracy."

I would tend to agree. But is Iraq such a place? In point of fact, before the 1958 pro-Soviet military coup d'etat that established a leftist dictatorship, Iraq did have its modest but nevertheless significant share of democratic history, culture, and tradition. The country came into being through a popular referendum held in 1921. A constitutional monarchy modeled on the United Kingdom, it had a bicameral parliament, several political parties (including the Baath and the Communists), and periodic elections that led to changes of policy and government. At the time, Iraq also enjoyed the freest press in the Arab world, plus the widest space for debate and dissent in the Muslim Middle East.

To be sure, Baghdad in those days was no Westminster, and, as the 1958 coup proved, Iraqi democracy was fragile. But every serious student of contemporary Iraq knows that substantial segments of the population, from all ethnic and religious communities, had more than a taste of the modern world's democratic aspirations. As evidence, one need only consult the immense literary and artistic production of Iraqis both before and after the 1958 coup. Under successor dictatorial regimes, it is true, the conviction took hold that democratic principles had no future in Iraq—a conviction that was responsible in large part for driving almost five million Iraqis, a quarter of the population, into exile between 1958 and 2003, just as the opposite conviction is attracting so many of them and their children back to Iraq today.

A related argument used to condemn Iraq's democratic prospects is that it is an "artificial" country, one that can be held together only by a dictator. But did any nation-state fall from the heavens wholly made? All are to some extent artificial creations, and the U.S. is preeminently so. The truth is that Iraq—one of the 53 founding countries of the United Nations—is older than a majority of that organization's current 198 member states. Within the Arab League, and setting aside Oman and Yemen, none of the 22 members is older. Two-thirds of the 122 countries regarded as democracies by Freedom House came into being *after* Iraq's appearance on the map.

Critics of the democratic project in Iraq also claim that, because it is a multi-ethnic and multi-confessional state, the country is doomed to despotism, civil war, or disintegration. But the same could be said of virtually all Middle Eastern states, most of which are neither multi-ethnic nor multi-confessional. More important, all Iraqis, regardless

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of their ethnic, linguistic, and sectarian differences, share a sense of national identity—*uruqa* ("Iraqiness")—that has developed over the past eight decades. A unified, federal state may still come to grief in Iraq—history is not written in advance—but even should a divorce become inevitable at some point, a democratic Iraq would be in a better position to manage it.

What all of this demonstrates is that, contrary to received opinion, Operation Iraqi Freedom was *not* an attempt to impose democracy by force. Rather, it was an effort to use force to remove *impediments* to democratization, primarily by deposing a tyrant who had utterly suppressed a well-established aspect of the country's identity. It may take years before we know for certain whether or not post-liberation Iraq has definitely chosen democracy. But one thing is certain: without the use of force to remove the Baathist regime, the people of Iraq would not have had the opportunity even to contemplate a democratic future.

ASSESSING THE progress of that democratic project is no simple matter. But, by any reasonable standard, Iraqis have made extraordinary strides. In a series of municipal polls and two general elections in the past three years, up to 70 percent of eligible Iraqis have voted. This new orientation is supported by more than 60 political parties and organizations, the first genuinely free-trade unions in the Arab world, a growing number of professional associations acting independently of the state, and more than 400 nongovernmental organizations representing diverse segments of civil society. A new constitution, written by Iraqis representing the full spectrum of political, ethnic, and religious sensibilities was overwhelmingly approved by the electorate in a referendum last October.

Iraq's new democratic reality is also reflected in the vocabulary of politics used at every level of society. Many new words—accountability, transparency, pluralism, dissent—have entered political discourse in Iraq for the first time. More remarkably, perhaps, all parties and personalities currently engaged in the democratic process have committed themselves to the principle that power should be sought, won, and lost only through free and fair elections.

These democratic achievements are especially impressive when set side by side with the declared aims of the enemies of the new Iraq, who have put up a determined fight against it. Since the country's liberation, the jihadists and residual Baathists have killed an estimated 23,000 Iraqis, mostly civilians, in scores of random attacks and suicide operations. Indirectly, they have caused the death of thousands more, by sabotaging water and electricity services and by provoking sectarian revenge attacks.

But they have failed to translate their talent for mayhem and murder into political success. Their campaign has not succeeded in appreciably slowing down, let alone stopping, the country's democratization. Indeed, at each step along the way, the jihadists and Baathists have seen their self-declared objectives thwarted.

After the invasion, they tried at first to prevent the formation of a Governing Council, the expression of Iraq's continued existence as a sovereign nation-state. They managed to murder several members of the council, including its president in 2003, but failed to prevent its formation or to keep it from performing its task in the interim period. The next aim of the insurgents was to stop municipal elections. Their message was simple: candidates and voters would be killed. But, once again, they failed: thousands of men and women came forward as candidates and more than 1.5 million Iraqis voted in the localities where elections were held.

The insurgency made similar threats in the lead-up to the first general election, and the result was the same. Despite killing 36 candidates and 148 voters, they failed to derail the balloting, in which the number of voters rose to more than 8 million. Nor could the insurgency prevent the writing of the new democratic constitution, despite a campaign of assassination against its drafters. The text was ready in time and was submitted to and approved by a referendum, exactly as planned. The number of voters rose yet again, to more than 9 million.

What of relations among the Shiites, Sunnis, and Kurds—the focus of so much attention of late? For almost three years, the insurgency worked hard to keep the Arab Sunni community, which accounts for some 15 percent of the population, out of the political process. But that campaign collapsed when millions of Sunnis turned out to vote in the constitutional referendum and in the second general election, which saw almost 11 million Iraqis go to the polls. As I write, all political parties representing the Arab Sunni minority have joined the political process and have strong representation in the new parliament. With the convening of that parliament, and the nomination in April of a new prime minister and a three-man presidential council, the way is open for the formation of a broad-based government of national unity to lead Iraq over the next four years.

As for the insurgency's effort to foment sectari-

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an violence—a strategy first launched in earnest toward the end of 2005—this too has run aground. The hope here was to provoke a full-scale war between the Arab Sunni minority and the Arab Shiites who account for some 60 percent of the population. The new strategy, like the ones previously tried, has certainly produced many deaths. But despite countless cases of sectarian killings by so-called militias, there is still no sign that the Shiites as a whole will acquiesce in the role assigned them by the insurgency and organize a concerted campaign of nationwide retaliation.

Finally, despite the impression created by relentlessly dire reporting in the West, the insurgency has proved unable to shut down essential government services. Hundreds of teachers and schoolchildren have been killed in incidents including the beheading of two teachers in their classrooms this April and horrific suicide attacks against school buses. But by September 2004, most schools across Iraq and virtually all universities were open and functioning. By September 2005, more than 8.5 million Iraqi children and young people were attending school or university—an all-time record in the nation's history.

A similar story applies to Iraq's clinics and hospitals. Between October 2003 and January 2006, more than 80 medical doctors and over 400 nurses and medical auxiliaries were murdered by the insurgents. The jihadists also raided several hospitals, killing ordinary patients in their beds. But, once again, they failed in their objectives. By January 2006, all of Iraq's 600 state-owned hospitals and clinics were in full operation, along with dozens of new ones set up by the private sector since liberation.

Another of the insurgency's strategic goals was to bring the Iraqi oil industry to a halt and to disrupt the export of crude. Since July 2003, Iraq's oil infrastructure has been the target of more than 3,000 attacks and attempts at sabotage. But once more the insurgency has failed to achieve its goals. Iraq has resumed its membership in the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) and has returned to world markets as a major oil exporter. According to projections, by the end of 2006 it will be producing its full OPEC quota of 2.8 million barrels a day.

The Baathist remnant and its jihadist allies resemble a gambler who wins a heap of chips at a roulette table only to discover that he cannot exchange them for real money at the front desk. The enemies of the new Iraq have succeeded in ruining the lives of tens of thousands of Iraqis, but over the past three years they have advanced their overarching goals, such as they are, very little. Instead, they have been militarily contained and politically defeated again and again, and the beneficiary has been Iraqi democracy.

None of this means that the new Iraq is out of the woods. Far from it. Democratic success still requires a great deal of patience, determination, and luck. The U.S.-led coalition, its allies, and partners have achieved most of their major political objectives, but that achievement remains under threat and could be endangered if the U.S., for whatever reason, should decide to snatch a defeat from the jaws of victory.

The current mandate of the U.S.-led coalition runs out at the end of this year, and it is unlikely that Washington and its allies will want to maintain their military presence at current levels. In the past few months, more than half of the 103 bases used by the coalition have been transferred to the new Iraqi army. The best guess is that the number of U.S. and coalition troops could be cut from 140,000 to 25,000 or 30,000 by the end of 2007.

One might wonder why, if the military mission has been so successful, the U.S. still needs to maintain a military presence in Iraq for at least another two years. There are three reasons for this.

The first is to discourage Iraq's predatory neighbors, notably Iran and Syria, which might wish to pursue their own agendas against the new government in Baghdad. Iran has already revived some claims under the Treaties of Erzerum (1846), according to which Tehran would enjoy a *droit de regard* over Shiite shrines in Iraq. In Syria, some in that country's ruling circles have invoked the possibility of annexing the area known as Jazirah, the so-called Sunni triangle, in the name of Arab unity. For its part, Turkey is making noises about the Treaty of Lausanne (1923), which gave it a claim to the oilfields of northern Iraq. All of these pretensions need to be rebuffed.

The second reason for extending America's military presence is political. The U.S. is acting as an arbiter among Iraq's various ethnic and religious communities and political factions. It is, in a sense, a traffic cop, giving Iraqis a green or red light when and if needed. It is important that the U.S. continue performing this role for the first year or two of the newly elected parliament and government.

Finally, the U.S. and its allies have a key role to play in training and testing Iraq's new army and police. Impressive success has already been achieved in that field. Nevertheless, the new Iraqi army needs at least another year or two before it will have developed adequate logistical capacities and learned

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to organize and conduct operations involving its various branches.

But will the U.S. stay the course? Many are betting against it. The Baathists and jihadists, their prior efforts to derail Iraqi democracy having come to naught, have now pinned their hopes on creating enough chaos and death to persuade Washington of the futility of its endeavors. In this, they have the tacit support not only of local Arab and Muslim despots rightly fearful of the democratic genie but of all those in the West whose own incessant theme has been the certainty of American failure. Among Bush-haters in the U.S., just as among anti-Americans around the world, predictions of civil war in Iraq, of spreading regional hostilities, and of a revived global terrorism are not about to cease any time soon.

But more sober observers should understand the real balance sheet in Iraq. Democracy is succeeding. Moreover, thanks to its success in Iraq, there are stirrings elsewhere in the region. Beyond the much-publicized electoral concessions wrung from authoritarian rulers in Egypt and Saudi Arabia, there is a new democratic discourse to be heard. Nationalism and pan-Arabism, yesterday's hollow rallying cries, have given way to a "big idea" of a very different kind. Debate and dissent are in the air where there was none before—a development owing, in significant measure, to the U.S. campaign in Iraq and the brilliant if still checkered Iraqi response.

The stakes, in short, could not be higher. This is all the more reason to celebrate, to build on, and to consolidate what has already been accomplished. Instead of railing against the Bush administration, America's elites would do better, and incidentally display greater self-respect, to direct their wrath where it properly belongs: at those violent and unrestrained enemies of democracy in Iraq who are, in truth, the enemies of democracy in America as well, and of everything America has ever stood for.

Is Iraq a quagmire, a disaster, a failure? Certainly not; none of the above. Of all the adjectives used by skeptics and critics to describe today's Iraq, the only one that has a ring of truth is "messy." Yes, the situation in Iraq today is messy. Births always are. Since when is that a reason to declare a baby unworthy of life?

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America and the America-Haters

Daniel Johnson

SINCE THE United States was attacked five years ago, and despite a very brief interlude of sympathy for the lives lost on September 11, anti-Americanism has increased sharply around the world. A nadir was reached during the invasion of Iraq in 2003; since then, there has been only a slight recovery of favorable opinion, limited to some countries. Even in Britain, America's closest European ally, the proportion of those with a positive view of the United States fell from 83 percent in 2000 to 55 percent in 2005. Anti-Americanism is strongest in Muslim states—and also in Western Europe, even in countries that are longstanding NATO allies. It is most virulent among the young.

These and other facts emerge starkly from a new book, *America Against the World: Why We Are Different and Why We Are Disliked*, by Andrew Kohut and Bruce Stokes.* Kohut is a veteran pollster; Stokes worked for the Clinton administration. The book's foreword is by Madeleine Albright, Clinton's Secretary of State. If this, and the book's subtitle, suggest a certain tilt in the book's agenda, the suggestion is correct—a point to which I shall return in discussing the authors' conclusions. But one does not have to agree with those conclusions to find *America Against the World* useful. Kohut and Stokes have put together a uniquely valuable collection of data, based on 91,000 interviews conducted by the Pew Research Center's Global Attitudes Project in over 50 countries around the globe. The surveys cover every aspect of anti-Americanism while also comparing the attitudes of Americans themselves on a variety of subjects with those of the rest of the world; the results make for sobering reading.

As the Pew surveys show, Americans differ from others on a wide range of issues, from terrorism and preemptive war to morals and "lifestyle." Most of these differences are unsurprising: Americans are less worried than Europeans, for instance, about global warming, and do not share European anxieties about the Americanization of culture and ideas. Other contrasts cut deeper and are more worrisome. Europeans now tend to hold the same view as Muslims not only about the invasion of Iraq but increasingly also about the war on terror. In 2004, majorities in France and Germany felt that American motives were not to be trusted in the fight against terrorism; of these skeptics, most believed that the main American impulses were to gain control over oil supplies, to support Israel, or even to achieve world domination. The same suspicions are voiced by most people even in such ostensibly friendly Muslim countries as Turkey, Morocco, and Jordan.

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One fact emerges very clearly from Kohut and Stokes: attitudes toward Americans are not necessarily linked to specific actions that the United States takes. Nearly 80 percent of Indonesians, for example, approved of the U.S. disaster-relief operation in the aftermath of the Asian tsunami in 2004. Yet anti-Americanism in Indonesia actually grew during the same period. What this means is that a shift in American foreign policy is unlikely to reverse or even to affect the tide of anti-Americanism. The mere fact of American power, combined with a readiness to use it in defense of American interests, seems enough to damn the United States in the eyes of many. Even when American power is deployed for their benefit, the gesture is either reinterpreted as malign in intent or is somehow disconnected from the dominant paradigm of American omnipotence and malevolence.

OBVIOUSLY, IT is vital to distinguish between friendly criticism and hostile antipathy, or between what I would call pragmatic anti-Americanism and fundamentalist anti-Americanism. The former is a hostility that is or purports to be based on actual experience and observation, and is usually local, i.e., focused on particular incidents or traits. An example might be the British brigadier general who recently expressed harshly critical comments about his U.S. colleagues in Iraq, alleging that they were too influenced by Hollywood imagery and too eager to imitate figures like John Wayne.

These observations relied heavily on stereotypes and ignored differences in public expectations of senior officers in British and American forces. But they could also be tested and, if untrue, refuted. Moreover, even if the British general was right about the particular U.S. commanders he encountered, it is possible that his experience was atypical and that his generalizations were therefore unwarranted. Presumably all this would carry weight if pointed out to him.

In short, pragmatic anti-Americans are in principle open to persuasion on the basis of countervailing evidence. Whether they actually do change their minds depends, needless to say, on many things, including their temperament and general disposition. In practice, it is true, few people find it easy to admit error: experience hardens into prejudice, and prejudice often disguises itself as experience.

But that brings us to the more extreme and clearly much more common form of contemporary anti-Americanism, namely, the fundamentalist kind. Here the hostility is nothing less than an article of faith, impregnable to reasoned discourse. An example: at a Catholic Easter retreat I attended this year, there was a discussion about the seven deadly sins. One group had been asked to name examples of pride. The group leader wrote on the board: "George Bush and Osama bin Laden."

This woman took it for granted that nobody in the room would question her implied moral equivalence between the leader of the free world and the free world's arch-enemy, or between the terrorist attacks of 9/11 and the American response to them. In this she was correct: nobody did question or contradict her, especially when, in explaining her choices, she reminded the group that the twin towers of the World Trade Center were a symbol of American arrogance and unearned superiority. This was a highly educated woman who had devoted many years to charitable projects in the third world and particularly in the small Pacific country of East Timor, which had endured massacre and oppression at the hands of Indonesia. It made no difference to her when it was pointed out that the United States had played a leading role in forcing the Islamic Republic of Indonesia to grant independence to the Christians of East Timor.

The distinction between pragmatic and fundamentalist anti-Americanism is one that Americans themselves, out of understandable feelings of defensiveness, sometimes find it difficult to uphold, tending occasionally to label instances of the former as evidence of the latter. Nevertheless, as Kohut and Stokes show, Americans actually tend to be *harsher* in their judgment of themselves than are any of their European critics. This habit of self-criticism often translates into a willingness to see America through the eyes of others, and to adjust one's behavior accordingly. McDonald's, for example, has recently been running an advertising campaign in the *Guardian*, Britain's most viscerally anti-American newspaper, with the slogan, "Everything McDonald's Does Is Questionable." Presented in question-and- answer format, the ads address charges that McDonald's hamburgers contain harmful additives, that the company exploits its impoverished workers around the world, and the like. The premise of the campaign appears to be that *Guardian* readers can be persuaded by such an exercise in self-examination to reconsider their own hard animosity toward an iconic American brand name.

In many ways, indeed, *America Against the World* exemplifies the same self-critical mindset, making it a very American book. Thus, only an American would title a book documenting the rise of global

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anti-Americanism with a phrase suggesting that Americans are against the world rather than the other way around. Only an American would conclude (as the subtitle implies) that Americans are disliked because they are "different." And only an American would assume that anti-Americanism is within America's power to eliminate.

But that is indeed what Kohut and Stokes seem to believe. Although they do not fully credit the idea that Americans "seek to save, reform, or convert the world in their image, as many people around the world fear," this fear, they suggest, is completely understandable as a response to the policies being pursued by the present American government. (In their words: "From the reluctant superpower with quasi-isolationist leanings in the 1990's, the United States has morphed into an assertive hyperpower.") That being so, the way to respond to the wave of global anti-Americanism is to reverse U.S. foreign policy, presumably by loosening the Republican grip on the White House and Capitol Hill.

IT IS HERE that the authors' unspoken political agenda shows most clearly, and most unconvincingly. For the glaring fact about anti-Americanism—a fact that every scrap of data in this book tends to confirm—is that in its prevalent form it is both incoherent and insatiable. Even if the United States were inclined to countenance appeasement of its enemies, as Kohut and Stokes all but explicitly advise, the demands of its anti-American critics are too numerous, too self-contradictory, and too all-consuming to be satisfied by anything less than an utter American abasement and, indeed, defeat.

A case that illustrates both the pathology and the propagandistic power of fundamentalist anti-Americanism is that of the British playwright Harold Pinter, winner of last year's Nobel Prize for literature. In his acceptance speech in Stockholm, Pinter declared: "The crimes of the United States have been systematic, constant, vicious, remorseless, but very few people have actually talked about them."

Noteworthy is how Pinter simply takes for granted the major premise of his argument—the enormity of the alleged crimes of the United States—while focusing his listeners' attention on the minor premise, namely, that few have talked about them. The latter claim is as false as the former: no nation's actions, real or imagined, have been subjected to such microscopic investigation, or to such popular mythologizing, as those of the U.S. government and its agencies. But it is much easier to insinuate a conspiracy of silence than to present evidence of the so-called crimes themselves. And it is flattering, too—as if Pinter's audience were being let in on a well-guarded secret to which he alone has had access.

If, moreover, someone were to object to Pinter's wild allegations of American diabolism by recalling some instance or other of the benign use of American power, Pinter is ready and waiting with an answer. As he put it in his Nobel Prize speech, "You have to hand it to America. It has exercised a quite clinical manipulation of power worldwide while *masquerading* as a force for universal good" (emphasis added). And then he called upon the world's beleaguered right-thinking people to rise to their duty: "I believe that despite the enormous odds which exist, unflinching, unswerving, fierce intellectual determination, as citizens, to define the *real* truth of our lives and our societies is a crucial obligation which devolves upon us all."

Here is where true pathology enters in. Pinter's mind, it appears, is not merely closed, but hermetically sealed to the point where his own "real" truth has occluded reality itself. His case demonstrates that anti-Americanism is not merely the ideology of fools; even people of great talent and intelligence can be possessed by its demonic power. Thus does perhaps the most famous living dramatist in the English-speaking world, a man who has just been awarded the highest accolade that the republic of letters can bestow, seize the occasion to assail the very power—American power—that guarantees the freedoms on which his entire glittering career has been built.

I doubt whether Harold Pinter could renounce his obsessive anti-Americanism even if he wanted to. Any rational calculus of America's impact on the rest of the world—political, cultural, economic, even environmental—would conclude that, on balance, the United States has been overwhelmingly a force for good. But such a calculus is irrelevant to the fundamentalist, for whom it is axiomatic that the United States is the ultimate cause of the world's evils. To abandon this belief would require a radical revision of one's entire view of the world. How many fundamentalists are capable of doing that?

Nor is Pinter's case, despite its outré flavor, so atypical of the European norm. Once no more than an expression of the Old World's condescension toward the New, European anti-Americanism has soured into a deep-seated resentment that is reckless of cause and consequence, and that di-

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verges not only from fact but from rational self-interest. This resentment is ultimately fueled by the long-term decline in European power. But it also arises from a failure (or a refusal) to come to terms with the fact that the United States rescued Europe three times in the last century: in both world wars, and then again during the cold war. Faced now by another common danger—global Islamist jihad, using as its instruments both terrorism and the threat of weapons of mass destruction—from which again only the United States can save it, Europe has gone into denial, and worse.

Adding fuel to the fire is the fact that the same crisis that gave rise to the new, fundamentalist anti-Americanism in Europe has also exposed the failure of European unification. That project had been predicated on a desire to emulate the power and influence of the United States; but Europe has instead been disunited and impotent, incapable of dealing with the localized Balkan crisis of the 1990's and lately with the global challenge of Islamist jihad. As progress toward a United States of Europe has ground to a halt, flummoxed most recently by last year's "No" votes on the European constitution, anti-Americanism has, for many, come to replace the hollowed-out ideologies of the past: social democracy, Communism, fascism, and now even Europeanism itself. Unable to define itself positively, Europe (as the data collected by Kohut and Stokes show) has come to define itself negatively, by what it is not—that is, America.

In his book, *Why Europe Will Run the 21st Century* (2005), the British writer Mark Leonard, formerly an aide to Tony Blair, claims that "American hegemony contains the seeds of its own destruction, and is already driving its own retreat." He is not alone in this prediction: apologists for the European Union still believe the American mission to spread democratic values is bound to fail, and some among them welcome that eventuality as the prelude to a new, European world order. Given that, by the middle of this century, as much as 70 percent of the European Union's adult population will be aged sixty or over, the chances seem remote that such hopes will be realized. But, so far, the anger and resentment behind them, based not on rationality but on delusion, show no signs of receding.

Added to all this, finally, is Western Europe's demographic crisis: not one of the continent's indigenous peoples is reproducing at replacement level. As is well known, this is what has created the economic pressure for mass immigration, which in turn has resulted in the proliferation of urban ghettos everywhere. Muslims who have settled in Europe often retain their own powerful animus against the United States, reinforced by moral disapproval of many aspects of American culture. And this animus, even though based in many cases on otherwise unfamiliar and deeply disquieting religious doctrine, has entered symbiotically into a kind of common consensus with the attitudes and beliefs of many secular Europeans.

BUT THIS raises a more general question concerning the source and nature of fundamentalist anti-Americanism, one on which Kohut and Stokes hardly focus but which seems to me to go to the heart of the matter. My readers may already have noticed a certain family resemblance between the relatively new prejudice of anti-Americanism and the world's "oldest hatred": namely, anti-Semitism. This resemblance is not accidental. Structurally, the two do indeed have much in common.* Both hatreds are impervious to the objections of logic or the evidence of history. In both, prejudice functions as a matrix of self-justifying, holistic conspiracy theories that substitute for rational thought. Both rely on fantasies about power and influence, discerning hidden patterns, concocting atrocity stories, gliding over inconvenient disconfirming facts.

Of the two, anti-Americanism would seem the easier to invest with verisimilitude. The United States actually *is* the most powerful country on earth, and so can more plausibly be blamed for anything and everything. Jews, on the other hand, make up such a minuscule proportion of humanity that anti-Semitism can seem inherently illogical to those not already disposed to believe it. But, precisely because it is not even remotely anchored in reality, anti-Semitism is also capable of accommodating any evidence that appears to contradict its assertions. Thus, after the Holocaust had made overtly racist prejudice against Jews beyond the pale in Western societies, anti-Semitism mutated into anti-Zionism—a metamorphosis that has enabled purer forms of anti-Semitism to regain respectability in public and academic discourse in the West.

But the resemblance goes beyond the structural. I would contend that the most important single reason for the emergence of a new, lethal, and even genocidal form of anti-Americanism is the conflation of attitudes to the United States with attitudes toward Jews. Put simply: anti-American-

* Natan Sharansky discusses aspects of this resemblance in his "On Hating the Jews," COMMENTARY, November 2003.

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ism has become a continuation of anti-Semitism by other means.

How has this deadly confluence of prejudices come about? Two strange bedfellows are primarily responsible: radical Islam and the secular Left, in improbable alliance. Within Europe's large Muslim population, as *America Against the World* confirms, many draw an explicit linkage between American support for Israel and what is perceived as Jewish control of American politics and society. In this they are not unusual: virtually all Muslims, Kohut and Stokes find, believe that the United States is biased toward Israel. Two-thirds of Jordanians and one-half of Moroccans believe that Jews have greater influence over U.S. foreign policy than does business, or the military, or indeed any other element in American society. Among European Muslims, such assumptions are axiomatic.

If they are not yet axiomatic among Europeans themselves, they are on the way to becoming so. This is especially the case in European universities, where Israel has long been demonized and, more to the point, anti-Zionism now merges seamlessly with anti-Americanism. According to Kohut and Stokes, popular opinion in Europe has gradually been moving in a similar direction: both the British and the French tend to side against Israel and with the Palestinians, while most ordinary Europeans believe that American policy is too favorable to Israel. It is thus hardly surprising that two American professors, John Mearsheimer and Stephen Walt, should earlier this year have chosen a European journal, the *London Review of Books*, in order to propagate their thesis that the "Israel Lobby" controls American policy in the Middle East, or that the thesis should have garnered immediate support from such prestigious British organs as the *Financial Times*.

Even before this endorsement from the heart of the American academic establishment, however, European anti-Americanism had become contaminated with the anti-Zionism and outright anti-Semitism that are ubiquitous on the Left, where "neocon" is a euphemism for "Jew" and anti-capitalist conspiracy theories have a long pedigree of thinly disguised anti-Semitism. Even more strikingly, there is a growing tendency for both Israel and the United States to be blamed not only for their own actions but even for the actions of their Islamist *enemies*. Europe, it is claimed, would not have become a target for terrorists in the first place had it not allowed itself to be associated with the "crusaders [i.e., Americans] and Zionists" targeted by Osama bin Laden.

Kohut and Stokes's data help us identify still another key factor in the melding of anti-Americanism and anti-Semitism in Europe. This is the belief that U.S. support for Israel is "faith-driven." Outraged by the paradox that American religion is still thriving in the midst of material prosperity, secular Europeans cleave to the idea that Christian evangelicals, inspired by a kind of millenarian crusade, and in league with a Jewish cabal, are driving American support for Israel. Many firmly believe that they are thereby being dragged into a clash of civilizations, and they profess to be terrified by the prospect. In the words of the *Economist*, an unfailing barometer of the European consensus, "War for oil would merely be bad. War for God would be catastrophic."

In reality, of course, U.S. foreign policy is customarily driven neither by cynical nor by millenarian motives, but—as is the case with most states—by enlightened self-interest. The Bush doctrine is a rational response to dire necessity. The Bush administration, moreover, is the first to have made the creation of a Palestinian state an official goal of U.S. foreign policy. If there seems lately to have been a shift on this last point, it is due to such perfectly rational factors as unrelenting Palestinian terrorism, Israel's disengagement from Gaza, and the rise of Hamas.

Nor do most Americans agree with Europeans that their foreign policy has been kidnapped by alien forces. According to Kohut and Stokes, attitudes toward Israel are influenced more by what Americans read and see with their own eyes than by where or how they pray. The values and interests shared by Americans and Israelis are rightly important to both peoples—too important, thankfully, to be sacrificed in order to appease the appetites of those who share neither.

What all this suggests is that anti-Americanism is not going to go away any time soon. Neither a change of policy nor a change of administration will put an end to a phenomenon that has developed its own insidious dynamic. If Kohut and Stokes's surveys are to be believed, many well-meaning Americans seem prepared to ascribe this global hostility to simple envy. Unfortunately, they have not taken in the dimensions of the hatred directed toward them, especially in Europe, or the degree to which it is now pervaded by the stench of a lunatic anti-Semitism. The vilification of America and Israel, of "crusaders and Zionists," reiterated constantly by Islamists, is now echoed by European politicians of the extreme Left (like George Galloway) and the extreme Right (like Jean-Marie

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Le Pen), and in softer form has been incorporated into the ideas and attitudes of large elements of European society.

Are there ways, if not of stopping it entirely, at least of mitigating the effects? More vigorous public diplomacy on the part of Washington and its friends could help, I believe, by reaching those in Europe whose anti-Americanism is still essentially of the pragmatic variety but who need to be armed with facts and arguments on the other side. So might a campaign against anti-Americanism in European universities.

But I would also like to see the Bush administration mount a counteroffensive. Fundamentalist anti-Americanism is now increasingly reminiscent of Nazi propaganda, with its harping on the supposed "Jewish influence" on Franklin D. Roosevelt. The arguments of today's anti-Americans may not be so unsophisticated, but neither are they any the less vicious than those of yesterday's Nazis and Communists. If the insurgency of evil ideas is to be turned back, they need to be both confronted and answered. Like Israel, the United States has nothing to hide, and is in the right. It is past time to say so, and to say why—honestly, forthrightly, everywhere, and often.

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Whatever Happened to the Jewish People

Steven M. Cohen & Jack Wertheimer

In memory of Charles S. Liebman

HOSTING MIKHAIL Gorbachev at their first summit in Washington, D.C. in December 1987, Ronald Reagan regaled his guest with a description of a mass rally held in the city just two days earlier to demand unrestricted emigration rights for Soviet Jews. Over a quarter-million Americans, mostly Jews, had gathered on the Mall, some coming from as far away as Hawaii, to march under banners demanding "Let My People Go." So moved had Reagan been by this display of ethnic solidarity in the name of democratic rights that he spoke about it for five long minutes as his visitor uneasily tried to shift the conversation to a safer topic, like arms control.

Today, less than twenty years later, it is almost inconceivable that the American Jewish community could muster the will to mount so massive a show of unity. It is not just that, at the moment, no large-scale crisis seems to engage the American Jewish psyche. Rather, something vital in that psyche has changed. Mounting evidence now attests to a weakened identification among American Jews with their fellow Jews abroad, as well as a waning sense of communal responsibility at home. The once-forceful claims of Jewish "peoplehood" have lost their power to compel.

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"ISRAEL IS a people like no other, for it is the only people in the world which, from its earliest beginning, has been both a nation and a religious community." Thus, some 65 years ago, the philosopher Martin Buber summed up an age-old peculiarity of the Jews. The classical formulation is in the biblical book of Exodus, where the children of Israel are commanded to serve at one and the same time as "a kingdom of priests and a holy nation."

For the most part, Jews have always understood that the two sides of this dual identity—the religious and the ethnic/national—are inextricably intertwined. As between the two, indeed, there are striking examples of a precedence being given to the dimension of peoplehood. Rabbinic exegetes over the ages, for instance, found significance in the sequence of commitments undertaken by Ruth the Moabite to her mother-in-law Naomi: "Your people shall be my people, and your God my God" (Ruth 1:16). For Ruth, the prototypical convert, first came an embrace of the Jewish nation, second came a declaration of faith in the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Jewish liturgy, similarly, situates the collective Jewish "we" not in the religious community but in the nation, as in the standard devotional phrase thanking God "Who chose us from all the peoples [*amim*]."

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Embedded in notions of Jewish peoplehood are strong familial or "tribal" associations. But the openness of the Jewish people to converts makes plain that the familial bond is itself a function not solely of biology but of a shared history, a common fate, and, for much of Jewish history, closely similar religious customs and practices. Through centuries of life as a minority group, Jews could thus function as something of a global polity. Leaders of far-flung local communities, both lay and rabbinic, maintained contact with each other, coordinated action, and, insofar as possible, strove to provide mutual assistance.

During the modern era, currents in society at large and within Jewish communities themselves began to erode this structure of world-wide allegiance. A conceptual unraveling set in with the Enlightenment and the emergence of modern nation-states. As Western countries undertook to confer legal equality on their Jews, the latter gradually ceased to view themselves as members of an autonomous people and began to redefine their distinctiveness as wholly or predominantly a matter of religious confession alone.

But ethnic cohesiveness hardly disappeared. In the United States, as many Jews of an older generation can still attest, an active concern with the fate of Jews around the world often survived the waning or even the disappearance of religious practice. During the 19th century, Jews motivated by bonds of peoplehood lobbied the U.S. government to intervene on behalf of imperiled fellow Jews abroad; during World War I, they established the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee to channel funds for the same purpose. Over the decades, American Jews created a large network of philanthropic federations and a panoply of aid organizations, "friends of" societies, lobbying groups, and political-action committees. Each was an expression of a commitment to the Jewish people in its many habitations.

The second half of the 20th century marked a high point of this spirit of engagement as increased consciousness of, on the one hand, the horrors of the Holocaust and, on the other, the significance of emerging Jewish statehood unleashed strong feelings of ethnic identification. On the eve of the Six-Day war in June 1967, American Jews rallied to render massive financial and emotional support to an embattled Israel; around the same time, they launched their epic struggle to free imprisoned Soviet Jewry, a struggle whose zenith was reached two decades later in the Washington demonstration that would so capture the imagination of Ronald Reagan.

THEREAFTER, THINGS began to change. They have done so most notably with regard to Israel—despite assertions by critics that the Jewish community continues to command vast powers of internal mobilization on this front. The change is easily traced in surveys of shifting attitudes. In 1989, a national survey conducted for the American Jewish Committee found 73 percent of Jews agreeing that "caring about Israel is a very important part of my being a Jew"; in 2005, a mere decade-and-a-half later, the corresponding figure had fallen to 57 percent. Younger adults, moreover, exhibit weaker attachment to Israel than do their elders.

Nor it is just a matter of Israel. According to the 2000/2001 National Jewish Population Study, younger adults are significantly less likely than their elders to agree strongly that "Jews in the United States and Jews around the world share a common destiny" or that "when people are in distress, American Jews have a greater responsibility to rescue Jews than non-Jews." Responses to the simple statement, "I have a strong sense of belonging to the Jewish people," are especially telling. The proportions strongly agreeing drop steadily from a high of 75 percent among those aged sixty-five or over to a low of 47 percent for adults under thirty-five.

The effects of these attitudinal shifts are likewise easily traced. The late 1980's, a period marked by the first Palestinian *intifada*, appear to have ushered in a period of creeping disaffection from Israel within sectors of the American Jewish community, and prior levels of support have never since been matched. During the second *intifada*, which began in 2000, a demonstration in Washington at the peak of the wave of Palestinian suicide bombings of Israeli civilians could muster only a relatively meager turnout.

What is true of public displays of unity is also true of levels of giving on behalf of causes that explicitly address the needs of the Jewish people as a whole. The year 1985 (a year characterized neither by an emergency in the Middle East nor by massive emigration to Israel requiring large infusions of aid) saw a total of $656 million raised by American federations of Jewish philanthropy. Simply to have kept pace with inflation, this amount should have grown to a figure of $1.19 billion by the time of the 2005 annual campaign. Instead, and notwithstanding continued wealth creation among American Jews, total campaign receipts increased to only $860 million, a shortfall of 18 percent. In this same time frame, the total size of allocations to Israel dropped on an inflation-adjusted basis by almost two-thirds.

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Apart from the fall in dollars, there has also been a steep decline in the numbers of those giving. In the decade 1990-2000, the proportion of Jewish households participating in the federations' annual fund-raising campaigns fell by a third. Although federation leaders say that increased generosity can compensate for lower numbers, in fact both dollars and donors have been in decline—two conjoined signs of the waning attractiveness of a united Jewish appeal to a united Jewish people.

How to explain this fraying of bonds? Several social forces are clearly operating at once; most of them, ironically enough, reflect well on the openness of contemporary American society and the relatively secure situation of Jews within it. The most blatant is the dramatically higher rate of intermarriage as compared with earlier generations. Of Jews now marrying, nearly half are being wed to non-Jewish partners. Whether as cause or consequence, the intermarried tend to have fewer Jewish neighbors, fewer Jewish friends, lower levels of membership in Jewish institutions, less attachment to Israel, and less allegiance to the Jewish people. As for Christians who marry Jews, they tend to understand Jewishness narrowly, as a matter of religious practice and faith rather than as an ethnic identity.

The new fluidity in relations between Jews and Gentiles can be seen not just in marital patterns but in other areas as well. Although two-thirds of Jewish baby-boomers still have mostly Jewish friends, two-thirds of their children, now young adults, have mostly non-Jewish friends. They also have fewer Jewish neighbors and co-workers than did their counterparts three or four decades ago. In sum, the social interactions of younger American Jews are far more likely today to be mainly with non-Jews, a reversal that, welcome as it is on many obvious grounds, is fraught with consequences for identification with the Jewish collective.

Other factors peculiar to America play a role here. Jews in the United Kingdom, France, Argentina, Australia, and South Africa, more acutely aware of their minority status, tend to be more connected to a transcendent notion of Jewish peoplehood (and also more bound to the state of Israel). Even Canadian Jews outpace their American counterparts in this respect. But, for a variety of reasons, contemporary American society seems less hospitable to the perpetuation of strong bonds of peoplehood.

Why is America different? For one thing, despite the modish talk about multiculturalism and the requirement to honor "diversity," ethnicity is in fact a weak and weakening form of identification here, at least among white people of European descent. The flurry of group celebration that was characteristic of the 1970's had no discernible effect on actual group cohesiveness. As the sociologist Herbert Gans observed back then, much ethnic assertion was "symbolic," with people looking for "easy and intermittent ways of expressing their identity, for ways that do not conflict with other ways of life." As a result, Gans concluded,

> they refrain from ethnic behavior that requires an arduous or time-consuming commitment either to a culture that must be practiced constantly, or to organizations that demand active membership. Second, because people's concern is with [personal] identity rather than with cultural practices or group relationships, they are free to look for ways of expressing that identity which suits them best, thus opening up the possibility of voluntary, diverse, or individualistic ethnicity.

Over the past decades, internal solidarity among all American white ethnic groups has continued to fall off. In fact, American Jews display *higher* rates of group allegiance, and lower rates of intermarriage, than do, say, Italian-Americans and Polish-Americans, two groups whose ancestors arrived in America around the same time as the mass migration of East European Jews. Nevertheless, most of the once-traditional props of Jewish peoplehood in this country—large immigrant populations, neighborhoods, Yiddish-inflected folkways, a distinctive cuisine—have faded from the scene. American Jews are now regarded, and appear largely to regard themselves, as part of the undifferentiated mass of American whites, not as a distinctive group in the multicultural "rainbow," a term that in any case mostly encompasses blacks, Hispanics, and Asian-Americans. Or, worse, Jews are portrayed by critics of prevailing American arrangements as partners and allies of the "hegemonic monoculture"—today's term for what was once known as the (white) ruling class.

Then, too, recent cultural patterns in the United States have profoundly altered the general relationship between the individual and the group. As documented by Robert Putnam in his influential analysis *Bowling Alone* (2000), the social "glue" connecting Americans has weakened. So, too, has the engagement of Jews in their own civic activities. American Jews now volunteer less than they once did for communal endeavors, and they join Jewish

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organizations at considerably lower rates. In a striking finding of the 2000/2001 National Jewish Population Survey, the major Jewish membership organizations suffered a nearly 20-percent decline in affiliation over the decade of the 1990's alone.

To be sure, other indicators of Jewish involvement have remained stable, or have actually improved. Membership in both synagogues and Jewish community centers has held steady, and measures of ritual observance, like attendance at a Passover seder or lighting candles on Friday evening, have also held their own or better. American Jews have also increased their participation in educational programs at all levels. But this heartening development has not noticeably contributed to augmenting their ethnic cohesion or their sense of peoplehood. Instead, it has gone hand in hand with its diminishment.

To see why, we need to consider another factor—namely, the distinctively American inclination toward congregationalism, individualism, and unfettered experimentation in religion. All of these serve to promote variety rather than uniformity, clearly lending creativity and vitality to the American religious scene—but no less clearly leading to fragmentation. The same holds true for American Judaism in all of its denominations, except perhaps for the Orthodox. Nowhere else in the world are the Conservative, Reform, and Reconstructionist branches so powerful and energetic as they are here. But this vitality, which has succeeded in attracting about three-quarters of all synagogue-affiliated Jews, has arguably also contributed to detaching them from their coreligionists elsewhere, and especially in Israel, where versions of Orthodoxy dominate and shape the received idea of Judaism held even by those who do not attend synagogue or adhere to Jewish religious practice.

If, moreover, American religion tends to the innovative, it also tends to the private and the spiritual. Here, too, American Jews have proved adaptive—especially lately, when they have been eagerly abetted by their rabbis and educators. Contemporary American Judaism is replete with the language of spiritual quest, personal "journeys," and searches for healing. At worship services, it is common for rabbis to speak of the Sabbath, for example, not as a sign of the everlasting covenant between God and the Jewish people but as a means of private emotional release, urging congregants to treat the day as a time for reviewing their personal experiences of the week just past and for letting go of their everyday cares. Similarly therapeutic notions inform many of the educational offerings now available to American Jews, from the lowest grades through university courses and adult programs.

Finally, one should mention the new "globalist" consciousness much touted by Western and especially European intellectuals. In the name of eliminating "boundaries" between and among people, whether national, ethnic, or religious, this quintessentially postmodern movement celebrates the trans-national, trans-cultural individual. It urges us to sample civilizational offerings wherever they may be found, and from these to assemble our own private identities. Rejecting "essentialist" claims of all kinds, it upholds the virtues of "hybridity," stressing that even the most homogeneous-seeming cultures are but manufactured admixtures of numerous influences. Absorbed into the mindset of educated Jews, this cluster of ideas works powerfully to undermine the concept of a distinctive Jewish people with its own culture, its own separate interests, and its own unique obligations.

ALL OF THESE factors have vastly complicated the task of mobilizing American Jews to take concerted action on behalf of specifically Jewish causes. Many, insofar as they are moved to action at all, seem to reserve their fervor for the approved "universal" causes of our time—Darfur, relief for victims of Katrina, domestic poverty, and the like. Although rabbis, educators, and Jewish agencies strive to link such non-sectarian causes to traditional Jewish teachings, they tend to become tongue-tied when it comes to urging attentiveness to distinctly Jewish needs.

Outside the organized community, some positively decry any preoccupation with specifically Jewish causes as unseemly, or retrograde. The well-known economist Jeffrey Sachs, for example, now the director of the UN Millennium Project, recently chastised Jewish donors for being fixated "on local and parochial concerns" instead of learning to "give globally." A writer in the liberal magazine *American Prospect*, even while acknowledging that "an estimated two-thirds of giving by Jews goes to non-Jewish causes," fretted that "in subsidizing trips to Israel and funding Jewish day schools, . . . Jewish philanthropists are retreating into a narrow tribalism." Once condemned as "rootless cosmopolitans," Jews, it seems, are now to be condemned for caring too much about their own. As between the two caricatures, it would be hard to see which is the less justified.

In any case, Sachs and the others are beating on an open door. Exquisitely sensitive to the new mood, Jewish professionals have moved not to resist but to accommodate it. Once upon a time, for

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example, the slogan of the United Jewish Appeal was "We Are One." Almost as ubiquitous was "Keep the Promise," a modern-day equivalent of the age-old rabbinic injunction, "Every Jew is responsible, one for the other." This language reflected the beliefs not only of fund-raisers but of donors—and was, to boot, recognizably Jewish in its idiom. (One can hardly imagine the United Way or Catholic Charities adopting the slogan, "We Are One.")

Today, however, the collective rhetoric of peoplehood is conspicuously soft-pedaled, if not quite abandoned altogether. The United Jewish Communities (UJC), the renamed umbrella organization of federations of Jewish philanthropies, now raises funds under a new slogan: "Live Generously: It Does a World of Good." Rather than appealing to a donor's sense of group responsibility, the tag line solicits in the name of individual virtue—giving out of the spontaneous goodness of one's heart.

And what is the Jewish "world" that is to be benefited by this generosity? Mostly, according to the UJC, it is a world made up not of institutions but of needy individuals: Jews in America "living below the poverty line," Israel's "lower-income populations," the "Jewish elderly in the former Soviet Union [who are] alone, hungry, and deciding between rent and medicine," and "Jews of all ages and affiliations" requiring educational subsidies or special programs. Nowhere in the UJC's catalogue of needy sub-populations is there any mention of support for the state of Israel, or for Jewish communities in their totality, or for overarching Jewish causes. Rather than a single collective whose religious civilization must be nurtured, whose cultural institutions merit constant support, whose future generations will have to be educated, the Jewish people is imagined in terms of thousands of otherwise disparate but needy individuals in the here and now.

DOES ANY of this matter? What exactly is lost by a redefinition of Jewry in terms of individuals rather than in terms of a single people, and of Judaism in terms of personal and private identity?

Our own answer is unabashedly "essentialist": seeing Jews as a global extended family, exhibiting concern on these grounds for one's fellow Jews, are authentic expressions of what, from biblical times forward, it has meant to be Jewish, and to act responsibly for the sake of the Jewish future. Jews are not solely the agglomeration of adherents of a particular faith, each seeking personal meaning; they are a people whose primary mark has been the conviction of a unique corporate role in history—the mark, to use classical theological language, of chosenness. To retreat from peoplehood is to repudiate what has been at the core.

Even from the point of view of the individual, the loss of this core can be devastating. To see oneself as part of a larger collective entity is to situate oneself in a history of 3,200 years and more, imparting a sense of transcendent connection, purpose, and destiny. It buttresses faith, enhances religious activity, lends significance to communal affiliation. For a sense of how intrinsic, how almost innate, this connection to peoplehood was within living memory, and how thoroughly inseparable from specifically *religious* ideas, here is how Eugene B. Borowitz, a Reform theologian, wrote about it in 1965:

> Jewish peoplehood is an indispensable part of Jewish religious thought and Jewish religious practice. A specifically *Jewish* religious life . . . means, therefore, life in and with the Jewish people, the Covenant community. . . . When at least ten Jews congregate to pray, they . . . represent all Israel, past and present, here and everywhere.

In slightly altered terminology, one could cite abundant sources to the same effect from secular Jewish authorities no less impelled by the idea of a communal Jewish mission. But whatever the language in which the idea of peoplehood is couched, it is impossible to believe that many forms of Jewish collective endeavor can survive without it. In the end, the decline of Jewish peoplehood is symptomatic of a decline of morale, of national self-respect. A people no longer proud of what and who it is, no longer dedicated to caring for its own, cannot long expect to be held in high regard by others, or to move the world by its message.

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No Good Deed

A Story

Joseph Epstein

SIEGEL PRIDES himself on taking people as they are, each by himself and one at a time. He's not about to play group favorites—blacks, gays, the handicapped, even Jews. All such claims to special treatment, he happens to think, are so much crap. But that doesn't mean he's heartless. Consider his adventures with Malik Hassan.

Malik stands in front of the Borders bookstore that Siegel passes every morning and evening on his way to and from the Northwestern train station, which is on the way to and from his work at the Chicago Board of Trade. Siegel could drive, but he likes the extra time to read the *Wall Street Journal* on the ride downtown, and the time to "decompress," as he calls it, on the ride back.

Malik sells the homeless newspaper, which in Chicago is called *StreetSmart*. Siegel has known him by sight for more than two years. Among his fellow vendors, Malik stands out for not being black or Hispanic. Also, as a man trying to earn his keep out of doors in the tough Chicago weather, for being old. Above all, for being completely unaggressive. Malik is dark. An Indian, maybe, or a Pakistani? Siegel, interested despite himself, isn't sure.

"Help the homeless," is what vendors of these papers usually call out in a loud voice. But not Malik. He just stands on the corner, silent, looking off into the distance, a packet of papers cradled in his arm. Siegel learns that the vendors pay twenty-five cents for each copy of *StreetSmart*, which they sell for a buck. At a suburban dinner party, he suggests that someone wanting to help out one of these guys should just give him a dollar and leave the paper.

Begging is big in the neighborhood. The reason, Siegel has discovered, is that the local churches and synagogues have set up soup kitchens, and one of them provides overnight shelter. As a result of this kindness, you can't walk a full block without getting hit up for your loose change or for the price of a ride on the El. Once, a goofy woman asked Siegel for money to buy a pair of dry socks. "Why dry socks?" he asked. "'Cause mine are wet, stupid," she said, and walked away.

When it comes to beggars, Siegel has never had a settled policy. He tends to give a dollar for what he regards as unusual requests. Twice a week he forks over a buck to a guy outside the Board of Trade who carries a sign reading, "Help Me Out. I Promise Not to Spend What You Give on Anything but Booze and Cigarettes." Siegel remembers his father being approached by a beggar for a quarter and responding, "Sorry, kid, but I'm working this side of the street." Siegel's father was small—maybe 5'5" and no more than 130 pounds—but fearless. Siegel is 6'1" and weighs 220, which,

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as his wife frequently reminds him, is heavier than he ought to be.

They have a nice variety of beggars in the neighborhood—this much Siegel has to concede. There are the quite mad ones from a nearby halfway house, many of them white women with pasty complexions and missing teeth; older black men in hanging dreadlocks and clothes that look like they haven't been changed in a fiscal quarter; and lots of young black guys in NBA or NFL shirts and huge gym shoes, some of whom bring a touch of menace to the job. Once Siegel was stopped, on a sunny afternoon, alone in the middle of the parking lot of the Jewel supermarket, by one of these young guys with felony muscles—muscles gained, he has been informed, by doing endless push-ups and chin-ups while in prison. The guy said he was just out of jail and could use help. Siegel came up with two loose singles and felt he got off cheap.

On his way to the train, Siegel used to pass a large woman in a light blue raincoat sitting on the back steps of the library, three small suitcases in tow, waiting for the building to open. She was missing some teeth but always looked freshly showered and, Siegel thought, hopelessly sad. Greeting him in what sounded like an educated voice, she asked one morning if he'd ever read the short stories of John Cheever. No, he said. Why? "Oh," she said, "you look a little like him." Another morning he offered to buy her breakfast—he was ready to hand her a twenty, she seemed so forlorn—but she said she had already eaten, thank you all the same. Now she's gone: into a madhouse, a pauper's grave, who knows where?

Many of these characters have stayed on the job longer than the young men and women who join and quickly depart Siegel's firm on LaSalle Street. There's the obese black man outside Blockbusters who says "God bless you" for every handout. There's the young man in a New York Yankees cap, with a mustache and goatee and long thin sideburns; he has the look of an assassin around the time of the Spanish Inquisition. Longest tenured of all—she must be twenty years at her post—is the tall mulatto woman standing outside the railing at the Dominick's supermarket, with her coffee-colored skin, fine features, and toothlessness—Lena Horne in hell, is the way Siegel thinks of her.

MALIK SEEMS somehow different—not crazy, certainly not menacing. He stands there in the cold, stoical, something intelligent in his eyes. His hair is steely gray and long in the back. He has a high, thin bridge to his nose and flaring nostrils. There is something majestic about him. He must be Siegel's age, or older.

In winter, wearing a baseball cap, Malik is layered up in clothes, no doubt acquired from the leftovers of church rummage sales. Sometimes he wears a sweater around his shoulders, like a combination scarf and shawl. Along the way he has acquired a fold-up chair, and in warmer weather he'll sit reading a paperback. He keeps a pencil or ballpoint pen in his hand to make notes.

Siegel first speaks to him on a viciously cold February day as he comes out of Borders into one of those Chicago winds that hit you like a smash in the face, and Malik's papers, maybe a dozen of them, are blowing out of his hand. Malik runs after them in one direction, Siegel in another. Between them they retrieve most of the blowaways. "Thank you," Malik says, "it's murder out here in this wind." He pronounces "out" with what to Siegel seems a slight Canadian burr, and something else not quite definable, a faint, odd rhythm in his voice. He's wearing a watchcap pulled over his ears. His face, despite its dark complexion, is high-blood-pressure red.

"Let me buy one of those from you," Siegel says.

"Sure," he says, "thanks a lot," carefully handing Siegel a *StreetSmart*.

From then on, they exchange friendly nods. Friday evenings Siegel takes to buying a copy of *StreetSmart*. On one such evening, he hands Malik his already read *Wall Street Journal*.

"Thanks," Malik says. "A good paper. Serious. Well-written." Siegel begins to makes an almost nightly habit of passing his *Journal* to Malik, and two or three times he adds a buck along with it. "Thank you," Malik says, always appreciatively.

"May I ask what you do for a living?" he asks Siegel one day.

"I'm at the Board of Trade," Siegel says. "In futures."

"I thought it must be something like that, I mean with the *Wall Street Journal* and all."

"What'd you do before this?" Siegel asks him.

"A bit of this and that," Malik answers. "I drove a cab for a while, owned by a Syrian gentleman whom I got into an argument with over a time sheet. He joined with the police to make it tough for me to find another driving job."

Siegel doesn't feel it's his place to press further.

"My name's Malik Hassan," Malik says, putting out his hand.

"David Siegel."

"You're Jewish," Malik says, "a fellow Semite." So he's a Muslim, Siegel thinks, although he's not exactly sure how to take the deadpan tone.

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As the weeks pass, Malik occasionally asks if he's picked up any interesting information about the economy. Like Siegel, he's a news junkie, and reads two or three real papers a day, which he fishes out of a nearby trash container. Once, when Siegel has been out of town for a few days, Malik asks where, and Siegel says St. Louis.

"Where did you stay?"

The newly refurbished Park Sheraton Hotel, Siegel replies. To which Malik says, very casually: "I once met Hubert Humphrey when he was speaking there." Interesting namedrop, Siegel thinks.

In his political views, Malik seems very mild, not angry as you might expect in a person who has been left behind. He isn't, Siegel thinks to himself, one of those types who'll attribute an ice-cream headache to the evils of capitalism. They even seem to talk calmly about the troubles in the Middle East. It could be, of course, that he's just being careful, knowing Siegel is a Jew and also that he makes his living as a capitalist.

Siegel remembers sitting at the same table with an Indian couple at his friend Burt Goldman's daughter's wedding. The husband was the Goldman family's internist, and his wife was a radiologist. How like Jews these two seemed, he thought. Years ago, he'd read in the *National Geographic* about Indians working as shopkeepers in Africa, the Caribbean, and the far outposts of Latin America; that, too, struck him as very Jewish. Of course, he thinks, they must have been Hindus, and Malik is definitely a Muslim.

Siegel finds himself telling his wife Julie that he plans on giving Malik Hassan $50 on New Year's Eve.

"I'm sure he's a nice man and all," she warns. "Just don't get too close to him."

NOW THEY'RE greeting each other by their first names—Malik asking to be called "Mal"—and on some evenings Siegel lingers to talk about the news or the economy and to answer questions about the market. Then one day, as Siegel gives him the *Journal*, Malik puts a hand over his face, and when he says thanks his voice is muffled.

"You all right?" Siegel asks. He can see that Malik's lower jaw has dropped, changing the shape of his face.

"I was beaten up and robbed last night, near a mission on South State Street. They broke my lower denture."

"Can you get another one soon?"

"Don't think so," Malik says. "The one they broke wasn't that old. And I've already had my troubles with Medicaid. The cops screwed me up with the bureaucrats down there. Hard to eat without bottom teeth." His speech isn't any too clear. Our looks don't improve much without teeth, Siegel reflects, but Malik, who usually has a sort of natural dignity about him, looks especially pitiful; the missing lower teeth age him by ten years. Siegel gives him $20, suggesting that he get some soft food. "Thank you, David," he says, his hand covering his mouth.

The next morning, without saying anything to Julie, Siegel calls Michael Cantor, his dentist, to ask the cost of a lower denture. If no extractions are involved, Cantor says, he can do it for $2,400.

That night Malik looks even more woebegone. Homeless isn't bad enough, now the man is half-toothless. "I've been thinking about your predicament," Siegel says. "I have this dentist. We've been betting on ballgames for years, and he's into me for nearly a grand. I've decided to take some of it out in trade. I called him, and he's agreed to make a lower denture for you. He says he can rush it through in less than a week. You can pay me back whenever you like."

"That's very good of you," Malik says. "But why would you want to do this for me?"

"Among other reasons," Siegel says, "because this is probably the only way I can get this guy to pay up on part of his debt. I'll call him tomorrow and let you know when he can see you."

"I'm very grateful, David."

When he calls for the appointment, Siegel tells Cantor that Malik Hassan is homeless but gentle, and in no way disruptive. "He's seen better days," Siegel says. "But he's clean, doesn't smell, usually shaves. I think he's a decent guy. He leads a hard life."

Why is Siegel doing this? The only explanation he can come up with is, why shouldn't he? Maybe he likes the idea of actually seeing his charity at work, one on one, instead of giving money to organizations that do God knows what with it. And then Malik is, as he himself said, a fellow Semite—maybe in some weird way there's something to that. With Muslims at war with Jews everywhere, here they are, the two of them, getting on so well. Another thing is that Siegel has made more than half-a-million this year, and his house, bought ten years ago for $700,000, has doubled in value. He's been on a pretty good roll. Somewhere he read that the real test of generosity isn't what you give but what you have left over after giving it. A lot to that, Siegel thinks. What will it hurt him to help out Malik Hassan? He doesn't mention it to his wife.

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On a cold Saturday, long after the denture has been replaced, Siegel exits the CVS drugstore and sees Malik at his usual post. He has galoshes on his feet, and looks as if he's wearing three sweaters under his ill-fitting trench coat. His watch-cap is pulled over his ears, but he's wrapped another sweater around his face and tied it under his chin, which makes him look like one of those women—babushkas, if Siegel remembers the term—who sweep the snow off the streets in Moscow. Malik wears no gloves.

"Brutal day, David," he says.

"Got time for lunch, Mal?" Siegel asks him. "You look like you could do with a bowl of soup. It's on me."

They walk across the street to Panero, a franchise joint with decent food. Malik orders vegetable soup served in a bowl made of bread, a turkey sandwich, and a large coffee around which he warms his hands. He keeps his coat on, and eats every scrap.

"This reminds me of the sandwiches at the Montefiore Club in Montreal," Malik says. "Have you ever been there?"

"Can't say as I have."

"It's the Jewish city club in Montreal. It's like the Standard Club here, but Canadian-style. Some of my father's wealthier customers took us there, usually on Friday nights when they had this fantastic buffet. Everything tasted wonderful. Jewish clubs always seem to have good kitchens. I mean that's what they're really about, the food, right?"

"What did your father do in Montreal?" Siegel asks.

"Men's shirts. He owned a factory with his older brother. Our family in India were always merchants. When partition came in 1947, they chose not to live in Pakistan. They sensed what was coming, got out before the slaughter, and settled in Canada. I was still in grade school when we left.

"In the clothing business, my father and his brother dealt mostly with Jews. They had houses on the same block in Westmount. That's the wealthy Jewish neighborhood in Montreal, or at least it was in those days. I don't know how they afforded it. But they always felt comfortable around Jews, and nobody ever bothered them."

"What made you leave Canada?" Siegel asks.

"My father and my uncle had a big falling-out. They went to their graves without speaking to each other for twenty years. It was over me, actually. My father was hoping I'd take over the business. His brother's wife couldn't have children. I left McGill after two years to work for them, but I was a wild kid. During my twenties I was girl-crazy. I did a lot of drinking, too, despite what Islam says. I'd disappear for two or three days at a time, usually holed up with some young woman. It drove my uncle mad; he was very devout. My father tried to defend me. A defense of the indefensible, I'm afraid. They split up the partnership. My uncle took the business, and my father invested his half of the money in real estate. It went bad."

"And then?"

"At first my father had me help run a few of his buildings. When that went sour, so did my job. I sold men's clothes for a while. Kicked around. I decided that Canada was too tame and came to the States when I was twenty-five. I'd always wanted to live here, ever since I was a boy and my father took me with him on his business trips. And I did fairly well for a while. But I couldn't hold a job. I had a real patience problem. Now I've finally learned patience. Too late to do me any good."

Siegel doesn't know how to respond. He asks Malik if he wants dessert.

"Thanks," he says, "but I'd better get back out there. I've got my expenses to make. I need to clear twenty-five dollars a day. I can get by on that."

Siegel wonders what his expenses might be: food, shelter, razor blades? On some nights he sees Malik headed toward the El with his bags—going where, he has no notion—so there's his fare to worry about, too.

"Usually make your twenty-five?" he asks.

"Usually, yes, if the police leave me alone. I have my regular customers. People who buy a paper and hang around to talk. They like the idea of chatting up a homeless man. Makes them feel better about themselves. By putting seventy-five cents in my pocket, they think they're doing a mitzvah, as your people say."

Siegel is dying to ask what he'd done in all the missing decades of his life, how he'd happened to meet Hubert Humphrey in St. Louis, what had finally driven him out into the streets, why he couldn't get himself into shape to do work of some other kind. Instead, he thinks about the fact that the men who sell *StreetSmart* have to pay a quarter for it, which means that the guy who's printing it must be showing a handsome profit. So many years at the Board of Trade have given Siegel a low view of human nature. For a long time now he's been waiting for a scandal to break about the huge fortunes a small number of people must be raking in from the recycling game.

Outside, the cold hasn't let up. Siegel makes a mental note to find a pair of old gloves he can pass along to Malik.

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"Thanks for the lunch," Malik says.

"Enjoyed it," Siegel says. Leaving him in the cold wind, he goes home, where, a blaze going in the fireplace, he watches the Illinois-Indiana game.

MALIK MAKES it through the winter—something Siegel isn't sure he could do in his place. He judges Malik to be in his late sixties: no sprung chicken, as Siegel's mother's Russian dressmaker used to say. He must have some terrific inner toughness. Maybe it comes from not having much choice, of having either to accept life on the terms in which he finds it or die. Stark but simple.

So many mornings, when he first awakes, Siegel feels a sense of doubt: time is running out, he thinks, am I doing the right thing with my life, does anyone but my wife and two daughters really give a damn if I'm dead or alive? He supposes Malik never gets around to such questions. If it isn't raining, or the wind isn't whipping in his face, or the cold numbing his hands and feet and face, or the sun boiling down on him, that must be gift enough.

Lunch with Malik is never repeated. Siegel gives him another $50 at New Year's Eve, continues to pass along his *Wall Street Journal*, each time with a buck in it to help him cover his daily expenses. Malik is beginning to look even older. Schlepping to the El with his heavy plastic bags filled with extra clothes, bits of reading, razor, toothbrush, and who knows what else, plus his fold-up canvas chair, he has begun to stoop badly, to shuffle as he walks. His greasy gray hair, straggling out of his one-size-fits-all baseball caps, flows down his neck.

During a rare trip to the library on a Sunday afternoon, Siegel spots Malik in a chair against a far wall, asleep with his mouth open. He wonders whether, in whatever shelter he finds himself in, Malik sleeps in his clothes, or sleeps at all. He must have to worry about other homeless characters stealing his few worldly goods. When does he have a chance to shower or shave? Does he miss many meals? What will he do if he gets sick? How does he keep things going? What keeps him from throwing in the towel?

Not very long after, as Siegel hands over his *Wall Street Journal* with the dollar bill on top, Malik, instead of exchanging a greeting or launching a discussion, takes the paper, mumbles his thanks, and turns away. The same thing happens the next night, and the night after that. Finally Siegel asks him what's wrong. Has he said or done anything to offend?

"You know what's wrong," Malik says, sudden anger on his face. "That conversation we had in the library last week. You reported the whole thing to the police. Those sons of bitches think they can mess with Malik Hassan, they've got another think coming."

"Mal," Siegel says, "we never had a conversation in the library. And even if we did, why would I want to report it to the cops?" But Malik turns away.

Paranoia. Of course, it has to be that. This isn't the first time Malik's complained about the police fouling up his life. Siegel has put it down to a tic of sorts; it's hard to believe the cops would spend much energy on an old homeless guy. Maybe Malik was a little crazy all along; if not, his unbearably hard life could easily have driven him into madness.

But why should Siegel, of all people, have become his enemy? He can't help thinking about the $2,400 he put out for his denture. Would an enemy have done that? Or is there something to the old saw that no good deed goes unpunished?

THE NEXT time Siegel passes by, Malik looks away with a particularly sour expression on his face. Does he know where I live, Siegel suddenly wonders? Is he, possibly, dangerous? Is he goofy enough to attack someone on the streets? Siegel decides to stop his forays to Borders, except after dinner or early on Sundays when Malik isn't on the street. He changes his route home from the train, noting with resentment that the move adds a wintry extra two blocks to his walk.

After a month or so he says screw it. He's done nothing wrong, and he won't go out of his way to avoid some sad, broken-down guy. He resumes his old route. When he passes by, Malik pretends he doesn't exist. Well, Siegel can live with that, even though he can't help half-hoping that Malik will call him over one evening and say, "David, I don't know what got into me, I just can't explain it, but I'm really sorry to have offended you, of all people." But months go by, and Malik never says anything of the kind.

A year or more later, around nine o'clock one night, Siegel picks up the phone and hears Malik Hassan's voice: "If you and the police think you can run me out of town, forget about it. It is not going to happen. I know all about people like you. I've dealt with them all my life. If I were you, I'd be careful who you're fooling with."

Siegel tries to answer, urge Malik to come to his senses, convince him it's all a mistake. But before Siegel can say a word, he has hung up.

Siegel doesn't tell Julie about the phone call, but less than a month later she shakes him out of a deep sleep. Someone is rumbling around on their

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front porch. It's nearly two in the morning. Sure enough, when he goes downstairs, Siegel sees Malik Hassan, bundled up in his winter clothes, trying to pry open a triple-track window and making a bad and noisy job of it. Siegel isn't sure what to do. He's certain he can overpower him, but who knows? He might have a knife or a lead pipe on him. So he does what Malik, in his paranoia, would guess he'd do. He calls the police.

Within five minutes they arrive and very efficiently drag Malik off, struggling and screaming: "Fucking cops, fucking Jews." Talking with one of the policemen, Siegel learns there isn't much they can do about a guy like Malik unless they catch him assaulting someone or actually destroying property. At the moment, the only charge Siegel can file is for trespassing. He sees no point in that, and the cop agrees. At most, Malik would get a week or so in jail.

Malik is still working the corner in front of Borders, still facing away when Siegel passes. Siegel wonders how many more winters he has in him. And here is something he feels strongly but is ashamed to admit: he hopes it's not too many. For reasons he can't quite explain to himself, he finds Malik Hassan to be an affront, a deeply personal affront, and would like him to disappear so that he'll never have to think about him again.

But he won't. No, Malik will not go away.

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Why Have Children?

Eric Cohen

OVER THE past few years, a new demographic crisis has emerged as a subject of intense debate: the most affluent, most advanced, freest societies of the world are not having enough children to sustain themselves. Recent books—including Phillip Longman's *The Empty Cradle* (2004) and Ben J. Wattenberg's *Fewer* (2004)—have described the potentially tragic consequences of this decline. Lamenting the collapse of modern birthrates, world leaders as diverse as Vladimir Putin and Pope Benedict XVI have advocated pro-natalist state policies. Popular magazines and newspapers that once worried about the horrors of a "population explosion"—mass starvation in developing countries, environmental catastrophe, the subjugation of women trapped by the excessive burdens of serial motherhood—today ask whether free societies mean to perpetuate themselves at all.

Right now, the answer, with a few exceptions, is no. The data Longman and Wattenberg present are compelling. Since the 1950's, the total fertility rate (TFR) in Europe has fallen from 2.7 to 1.38—an astounding 34 percent below the replacement rate of 2.1, which is the average number of children per couple needed for a society to sustain itself. Japan's fertility rate is 1.32, and its average age is already forty-two years and climbing. (The world average, by comparison, is in the mid-twenties.) A large number of nations, including Russia, Spain, Italy, South Korea, and the Czech Republic, have TFR's between 1.0 and 1.3; some of these nations (most notably Russia) are already experiencing rapid population decline. Generations of children are growing up without brothers or sisters, and a sizable percentage of men and women in the most advanced nations will never have any children at all.

Compared with most of its democratic peers, the United States is still in decent demographic shape, with a fertility rate hovering near replacement and with sizable variations from region to region (higher fertility in most "red" states, lower fertility in most "blue" states) and as between child-rearing immigrants and child-avoiding natives. But like every other advanced nation, the U.S. is also heading toward a mass geriatric society, with more elderly dependents and fewer grown children to care for them or grandchildren to replace them.

THE CONSEQUENCES of the birth dearth now worry people of every imaginable political, religious, and ideological stripe. One major set of worries is economic. In a 2004 study commissioned by the European Union, the Rand Corporation warned that "declines in human capital" are regularly accompanied by potential reductions in productivity, consequent burdens on "pension and social-insurance systems," and, with smaller households, a decreasing ability "to care for the growing

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elderly population." In other words: fewer workers, more retirees, and a fiscal crisis for the European welfare state.

The economic problems do not stop there. Older populations are less likely to be innovative and entrepreneurial, and less likely to produce the consumer power necessary to drive national economies. Moreover, those states that raise taxes on the young to support programs for the old will only make it more difficult for the rising generation to afford children of their own. The result is a vicious cycle of economic stagnation, a graying of society on the way to decline or extinction.

But the deeper demographic worries are cultural. To Longman, the central looming problem is what he calls, in the title of a recent article in *Foreign Policy*, "The Return of Patriarchy." Since religious fundamentalists are still having children while liberal secularists are not, Longman fears a "new Dark Ages," a demographic reversal of the Enlightenment in which zealous Christians at home and radical Muslims abroad will eventually inherit the earth. He therefore wants liberals to become pro-natalist, and urges democratic societies to enact child-friendly social and economic policies. If children are more affordable, he hopes, happiness-seeking adults with limited resources will have more of them.

George Weigel, relying heavily on Longman's data, flips his argument on its head. In *The Cube and the Cathedral* (2005) and again in last month's COMMENTARY ("Europe's Two Culture Wars"), he argues that the cause of population decline is the abolition of Christian Europe, the birthplace of human rights and human progress. Conversely, Christian renewal offers, for Weigel, the best hope of saving the West from the twin dangers of liberal secularism's soul-destroying barrenness and radical Islam's nation-destroying fecundity. A similar argument has been advanced in the *New Criterion* by the columnist Mark Steyn, who attributes the West's low fertility to its "lack of civilizational confidence." The "design flaw of the secular social-democratic state," Steyn writes, "is that it requires a religious-society birthrate to sustain it."

Other cultural dangers loom as well. Once today's childless generations grow old, they will face the prospect of their own mortality without children to care for them, comfort them, and mourn them. As the personal freedom of the past ends in isolation, euthanasia may come to seem the most rational, or perhaps the only plausible, solution to the debilities of old age. Not only that, but the old will die with little assurance that the faith of their fathers will persist after them, from generation to generation.

OF COURSE one must always tread lightly in contemplating the choices of free people in free societies—choices often made for good human reasons. Nor is there perfect analytic unanimity on how exactly we have come to our present pass and what it portends. No single explanation seems able to account for variations in fertility rates from place to place, and no simple correlation suggests itself between economic conditions on the one hand and birthrates on the other, or for that matter between religiosity and fecundity.

Thus, sub-cultures within the wealthiest nations—like the *haredi* Jews of New York or the Mormons of Utah—have fertility rates that are among the highest in the world, even as those of their next-door neighbors are among the lowest. Even among modern democratic nations as a whole, moreover, the richest—like the United States or France—can show comparatively higher fertility rates while some of the less wealthy—like Poland or Hungary—have comparatively lower ones. As for the notoriously fecund Islamic countries, Saudi Arabia and Afghanistan rank among the world's most fertile, but Iran is among the least. (Where the Iranian regime in the 1980's demanded more "soldiers for Islam," today it punishes those who produce three children or more.)

Ours, moreover, is hardly the only age or civilization to experience a demographic crisis. "In our own time," wrote Polybius in roughly 150 B.C.E., "the whole of Greece has been subject to a low birthrate and a general decrease of the population, owing to which cities have become deserted and the land has ceased to yield fruit." The reason for this decline, he believed, was decadence. "For as men had fallen into such a state of pretentiousness, avarice, and indolence that they did not wish to marry, or if they married to rear children born to them, or at most as a rule one or two of them, . . . the evil rapidly and insensibly grew."

In the most modern parts of the modern world, however, three aspects of fertility do seem historically unprecedented and clearly important. First, there is no stigma attached to being childless; a woman's worth, in this life or the next, is not judged adversely if she chooses never to have children. Second, children are no longer economic assets, as they generally were in rural and early industrial societies; rather, they are economic burdens, voracious consumers who produce virtually nothing until their late teens or early twenties. Third, fertility control

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is now both uneventful and virtually absolute. Those who want to avoid having children can easily do so—without restraining their natural sex drive, without putting themselves at physical risk, and without resorting to infanticide or abortion.

Children are thus culturally optional, economically burdensome, and technologically avoidable. Still, having the option to avoid children is not a *reason* to avoid them, and for many, clearly, the economic burdens seem bearable enough. So the question remains: why do so many men and women in the most affluent societies in history seem to want so few offspring?

A small literature has been devoted to this question by now. In "What Do Women Really Want?" (*Public Interest*, Winter 2005), the social scientist Neil Gilbert develops an attitudinal typology running from so-called "traditionalists"—i.e., women with three or more children who "derive most of their sense of personal identity and achievement from the traditional childrearing responsibilities and from practicing the domestic arts"—to, at the other end of the spectrum, "postmodern" women who are childless "by choice" and focused on themselves and their careers. In the middle are "modern" women with one child and "neo-traditional" women with two children—ways of life that vary in degree but not in kind from the big-family traditionalists and no-family postmodernists.

Over the past few decades, Gilbert finds, the trend toward the "modern" and "postmodern" end of the spectrum has been significant, with predictable demographic results. In the United States, the number of women with no children has nearly doubled to 18 percent and the number with one child (now 17 percent) is climbing faster than the number with two (now 35 percent). If, in 1976, 59 percent of women over forty had three or more children, today only 29 percent do. In Europe and Japan, the figures are skewed even more heavily toward childless and one-child families.

TO BE SURE, for some men and women, childlessness is an un-chosen misery. But as Gilbert's categories suggest, most childlessness in our age is clearly purposive—the result of the positive pursuit of social and moral goods other than children. In defining and justifying this huge cultural trend, the twin forces of modern feminism and modern individualism have been decisive.

The early stirrings of today's "childfree movement" have been traced by Elaine Tyler May (in *Barren in the Promised Land*, 1997) all the way back to the time when the great postwar baby boom in the United States was beginning to come to an end. She cites a playful 1958 article titled "Pity the Childless Couple":

> There's nothing sadder than the childless couple. It breaks you up to see them stretched out relaxing around the swimming pools . . . all suntanned and miserable . . . or going off to Europe like lonesome fools. It's an empty life. There's nothing but more money to spend, more time to enjoy, and a whole lot less to worry about.

By the late 1960's and 1970's, these "musings of a good mother—on a bad day" would become an entire philosophy of life. Its components included a radical turn against motherhood—"the birth of children," wrote Ellen Peck in *The Baby Trap* (1971), "marks the end of adventure, of growth, of sexuality, of life itself"—coupled with a defense of unencumbered sex and romance and an embrace of female ambition and worldly power.

This redefinition of the meaning of life has now survived three decades in which feminism itself has been redefined over and over again. Today, for example, "choice feminism"—the idea that every woman should decide for herself the best mix of motherhood and career—is widely acknowledged to have failed, amid much bitterness on the part of women who complain they were deceived into thinking they could "have it all." In a recent essay in the *American Prospect*, the feminist Linda Hirshman contends that women who have tried to balance work and family end up sacrificing the former to the latter, living lives tyrannized by diapers and dependent on men for their sustenance. Instead of such false "choices," she advocates a return to feminism's radical roots—ruthlessly ambitious, focused on self and money, uninterested in children. If a woman must have a baby, Hirshman writes, she should stop at one. (Somewhat flippantly, she also concedes that "if you follow this rule, your society will not reproduce itself.")

In their case against children, feminists of this stripe find a passionate ally in the environmentalist movement. Like feminism, environmentalism is a cause with many faces, but a majority of its adherents subscribe to the basic maxim that the fewer people there are, the less pollution there will be. In this view, man is not the measure of all things, and self-control, including reproductive self-denial, is sometimes obligatory for the good of the planet. The classic statement of this view is Paul Ehrlich's 1968 tract *The Population Bomb*, which declared: "We must have population control at home, hope-

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fully through a system of incentives and penalties, but by compulsion if voluntary methods fail." In *Maybe One: A Personal and Environmental Argument for Single-Child Families* (1998), Bill McKibben articulates the same sensibility with far greater moderation, arguing that single-child families are not only environmentally virtuous but often best for the child.

As McKibben's formulation suggests, however, environmentalist zeal in itself is rarely the reason that people decide not to have children or to limit their progeny to one. It is, instead, a way to add a patina of self-sacrifice to decisions made on other grounds—mostly self-regarding or family-regarding ones.

Not that such grounds are necessarily trivial or unworthy in themselves. Raising children is a labor, requiring a constant outlay of time and energy, imposing a burden of new and growing expenses, and limiting one's personal freedom for two decades or more. To many, the economic and/or psychic costs may well seem too high, and there is no shortage of experts supplying data to confirm that impression. According to an author writing in the *New Yorker*, "Married couples with children are twice as likely as childless couples to file for bankruptcy. . . . And they're also far more likely to face foreclosures on their homes." According to another recent study, parenthood is often associated with higher rates of depression.

No wonder, then, that many people decide to have just one child, or maybe two. For many parents—not themselves excessively selfish, or ideologically committed to childlessness, or ruled by ambition alone—the most compelling reason not to have more children is to benefit the child they already have, with the best schools, the best medical care, and the nicest neighborhoods. In this conception, having only one or maybe two children translates into an effort on the part of parents to act responsibly in a world of high economic expectations and emotional pressure. Anti-children in effect, they are pro-child in intention.

YET HEREIN also lies the dilemma, at least where society is concerned. The one-child family may flourish economically, but, as we have seen, a society of one-child families can lead to "market failure" on a disastrous scale, especially when, as in our own system, the young are expected to pay for the old through entitlement programs like Social Security and Medicare. Private wealth can lead to public impoverishment.

Admittedly, the relationship between demographics and economic prosperity is a complicated matter. In dysfunctional nations that still lack market economies, keeping fertility low can be a form of short-term humanitarianism, reducing the extent of general misery. Moreover, it is quite possible that dramatic fertility reductions in countries like India and China have had beneficial economic effects, by limiting the number of dependent children, freeing women to join the "productive" sector, and temporarily expanding the working-age population. But even in such societies this "demographic dividend" will eventually need to be repaid as the population ages and the ratio of young workers to elderly dependents reverses itself.

In America, Europe, and the world's other advanced democracies, this same demographic shift —more elderly dependents, fewer workers, the overall graying of society—is already here and getting worse. Today's remedial measures—increases in daycare benefits in Sweden, tax incentives for couples with children in France, a new prescription-drug benefit in America—are modest to a fault: too small to convince potential parents to have children (or more children), and likely only to increase the cost of already burgeoning entitlements. And today's worries are mild compared with what is almost certainly coming when the baby boomers retire.

True, those who have only one child or no children are usually wealthier throughout the course of their lives than those who bear the economic costs of raising the young, and they have ample capacity to save for their own retirements. True, too, childless societies in which people accumulate assets during youth, spend them down when they are old, and leave nothing behind can perhaps manage a smooth transition to extinction. Alternatively, one can imagine a renewal through immigration, with young workers born in the heyday of African or South American fertility moving to North America and Europe to make a living for themselves and to support the graying natives.

But merely to state such "solutions" is to reveal that they are partial at best. After all, the inability or unwillingness to see oneself as old and in need of care, or to envision a world that will continue after one is gone, might inhibit rather than enhance the accumulation of adequate resources to pay for old age, just as it inhibits the creation of human capital in the form of children. While some middle-class couples with two incomes and no children (or one child) would be able to pay for their own healthcare until death, using money their neighbors have spent to send their three children

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to college, many will not think adequately about the needs of old age until it arrives. And they will almost certainly exert their oversized political power to preserve their personal entitlements when it comes time to collect them. As for immigration, despite America's track record of success in integrating newcomers, deep reservoirs of discontent have already gathered on this matter, as recent debates have underlined. Meanwhile, the democratic nations of Europe, with little success in integrating immigrants and with expanding and radicalizing Muslim populations, feel a need to close their doors at the very moment when their economic survival requires them to remain open.

Ironically, even a sudden upswing in European and American birthrates would not offer an immediate answer to today's demographic crisis. Children enter the world as helpless infants, not as high-tech entrepreneurs or geriatric nurses. (In this latter respect, adults without children of their own may have more time and resources to care for their aging parents, even if no one to care for them in turn.) Moreover, state programs intended to encourage higher fertility or to ease the economic burden of raising children are very expensive and will only worsen the fiscal situation, at least temporarily. No matter what we do, some amount of short-term economic pain is almost inevitable.

BUT WHAT matters most is the long term, and what will determine the long-term fate of modern democracies is not economics but culture. No one will decide to have children in order to improve the balance sheets of a nation's pension system. Only a different attitude toward the bearing and rearing of the young can ensure that Western civilization as we know it has a future.

Here is where the experience of the past may help us think through what is unique and what is permanent about our own situation. If drastically falling birthrates are hardly a new phenomenon in human history, neither is fertility control, and the reasons advanced for it by the ancients are of compelling interest—as are their reasons for having children in the first place.

In both ancient Greece and Rome, fertility control was seen as a prudent course for well-established families to follow: a means of transferring wealth from generation to generation, undivided by multiple heirs, and of preserving each man's share of immortality by preserving the family name. As Hesiod described, one would "hope for an only son to nourish his father's house, for this is how wealth waxes in the hall." Aristotle suggested that "the proper thing to do is to limit the size of each family, and if children are then conceived in excess of the limit so fixed, to have a miscarriage induced before sense and life have begun in the embryo."

In general, Greek and Roman children were not seen as sacred gifts but as products of nature—sometimes wanted and sometimes not, sometimes with the potential for human flourishing and sometimes sub-human, sometimes useful to their progenitors and sometimes liabilities. "Monstrous offspring we suppress," wrote Seneca, "and we drown infants that are weakly or abnormal." The natural affections of mothers and fathers for their children, surely not absent, were usually governed (at least among elites) by the patrilineal ideal or the pursuit of pleasure, sexual and otherwise. As Angus McLaren explains in his superb study, *A History of Contraception* (1991), "the Roman elite did not relish the prospect of their urbanized, civilized style of life being jeopardized by a horde of infants."

But in those days, too, the good of the family and the happiness of the individual did not always serve the public good. At some point, the Roman combination of patrimony and pleasure broke down, prompting fears of depopulation and giving rise to laws that punished the unmarried and the childless and that publicly rewarded those with three or more children. In support of such "marriage legislation," the emperor Augustus supposedly read from the famous speech of the censor Quintus Caecilius Metellus Macedonicus, delivered in 131 B.C.E.:

> If we could survive without a wife, citizens of Rome, all of us would do without that nuisance; but since nature has so decreed that we cannot manage comfortably with them, nor live in any way without them, we must plan for our lasting preservation rather than for our temporary pleasure.

Making the leap from Athens and Rome to the world of the Bible, one encounters a rather different idea of procreation. It is captured succinctly in the famous passage from Genesis: "be fruitful and multiply." When God addresses Noah after the flood, His speech begins and ends with these words—first as a divine blessing, then as a divine commandment.

God seeks to replenish the world destroyed by the flood, and to introduce a new age of law and justice ruled by men who are themselves ruled by God. Yet man, unlike the other animals, must be *commanded* to have offspring. Even as his God-like

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possibilities depend upon his animal-like capacity to reproduce, he alone among the animals has the power to reject and control his procreative powers. Man alone is tempted by illusions of self-sufficiency, or is prone to allow either present goods or present miseries to curb his desire to raise up the next generation. One might even say that the Bible here offers a preemptive critique of sociobiology—that is, the idea that the passing-on of our genes is the deepest impulse of human existence—before this new science was fashionable (and before it was clear that sociobiology cannot explain the current age of fertility decline).

On the subject of childlessness, it is also useful to compare two seemingly parallel passages from the ancient world. "I shall beget no sons to swell Rome's glory; not of my son shall historians tell," wrote one Roman poet to his mistress. "Let me be your one joy; you at my side, I have no need of sons to feed my pride." In the biblical book of Samuel, there is another male speech about childlessness—that of Elkanah to Hannah, his beloved but barren wife: "Hannah, why are you crying and why aren't you eating? Why are you so sad? Am I not more devoted to you than ten sons?"

Of course, we know that Elkanah already has sons and daughters of his own by another wife, which may account for his rather sanguine attitude. Then, too, his failure to understand Hannah's misery—"forgotten" by God, and cruelly mocked by her fecund rival—may reflect a distinctly male blindness to her distinctly female longing for a child. But whatever the cause, Hannah herself, unlike the Roman poet, could never say "I have no need of sons," and her ultimate reason for wanting them is the very opposite of "feeding her pride." Indeed, she sees the child she wants as a child wanted for God. She relies upon God to open her womb, and God Himself relies upon the fruit of her womb to sustain His holy way in the world against the "wicked [who] perish in darkness."

THE ANCIENTS thus set before us three different ideas of procreation. The first is patrilineal pride—the desire to preserve one's immortal name in the flesh of one's children but to limit their number for the economic benefit of parent and child alike. The second, going beyond the notion of limiting the number of one's offspring, is freedom from children, including the sexual freedom that needy infants interrupt. The third is perpetuation as an act of devotion—whether to the city, to God, or to the young themselves, who will inhabit a future one hopes to sustain but will never see.

These three desires—for patrimony, for pleasure, for perpetuation—still exist in often tragic tension, competing for our devotion. Do they have anything instructive to tell us about our own way forward in a secular and highly individualistic civilization? In their emphasis on culture over economics, one thing they may suggest is that even a pro-child tax system of the kind envisioned by Phillip Longman is unlikely to inspire the purposely childless among us to change their ways. But neither are we likely to undergo a mass religious awakening and become as pious as George Weigel and others might wish us to be. Much as we need a generation moved by Hannah's maternal longings, we cannot rely on her unshakable faith to fuel it.

If there is any hope for the modern West, we need a persuasive, humanistic answer to the question, "Why have children?"—and in the plural, not the singular. The answer will have to resonate with those open to religious faith but uncertain that God wills them to be fruitful. And it must appeal to those who appreciate the material benefits of modern life but are not so governed by modern ambitions that having more children seems like robbing opportunity from the one or two children they already have—and who are prepared to see that, in seeking the perfect or perfectly happy child, they may be denying their offspring the greatest benefit of all: brothers and sisters with whom to grow up.

The philosopher Gabriel Marcel, in a pair of lectures delivered in Europe in the early 1940's, spoke of the "inextricable combination of things from the past and things to come" that defines "the mystery of the family," a "mystery in which I am involved from the mere fact that I exist." Just as we ourselves are the "incarnation" of past generations, so on our shoulders the future of our ancestry rests. Even the most modern individual can discover that he is not "endowed with an absolute existence" of his own, and that his personal happiness entails insuring the ability of another generation to seek happiness after he is gone. In our children, the past that we incarnate is potentially preserved or redeemed, the sweet abundance of the present appreciated anew, and the future—of our families, our people, our beliefs—at least given a chance.

According to a recent Gallup poll, fully 70 percent of childless women over the age of forty regret that they have had no children. Such a statistic is reason for great sadness, but perhaps also modest hope.

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OBSERVATIONS

Refighting the War

Victor Davis Hanson

TEN YEARS ago, Michael R. Gordon of the *New York Times* and the retired General Bernard Trainor wrote a critically acclaimed revisionist history of the first Gulf war. Challenging the rosy consensus view of that four-day victory on the ground, *The Generals' War* (1995) set out to show that the abrupt removal of Saddam Hussein from Kuwait could be explained as much by Iraqi impotence as by American competence. Nor was that the authors' sole point of contention. At war's end, they charged, civilian overseers in the Pentagon and at the State Department had failed to translate tactical military success into lasting strategic advantage. Instead, the murderous Iraqi dictator was left in power, and with him a geopolitical stalemate: though weakened, Saddam was still capable of paralyzing American Middle East policy for years to come.

Now, in *Cobra II*,* the same authors have returned with an account of the three-week war of 2003 and its aftermath. The sense of déjà vu extends even to the *dramatis personae*. Here, in the celebrity role played earlier by General Norman Schwarzkopf, is General Tommy Franks—no less blustering and imperious, and at critical junctures no less deaf to the advice of more informed subordinates. If, in 1991, no real direction had come from Washington, thus allowing Saddam's defeated generals to proceed pretty much as they pleased against the postwar Shiite and Kurdish resistance, so, too, we learn here, no plan to speak of existed for the aftermath of victory in 2003. Colin Powell, portrayed in *The Generals' War* as nonchalantly allowing Saddam to persist in power, appears a decade later nonchalantly allowing the neoconservatives to pursue their trumped-up war.

Three interpretive themes, outlined in the opening chapters, dominate the narrative of *Cobra II*. First, after September 11, George Bush rather abruptly decided to go to war with Iraq, whether or not the threat posed by Saddam Hussein was as imminent or as dire as the President, in his misplaced obsession with Iraq's weapons of mass destruction, insisted. Yet the administration was also woefully unprepared to fight such a war, being reluctant either to devote sufficient military resources to the enterprise or to mobilize the nation for the struggle that lay ahead. Hence, for Gordon and Trainor, there arose from the beginning a fatal "disparity of ends and means."

Second, Gordon and Trainor hammer Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld for not listening to his generals, who wanted far more troops to fight the war itself. Rumsfeld envisioned Iraq as a testing ground for his personal theories of military transformation, according to which lighter, more mobile forces would do the work once performed by massive deployments of heavy infantry. He therefore approached the issue of numbers "with the ruthless efficiency of a businessman for whom excess inventory was to be avoided at all cost."

This, the authors argue, proved almost catastrophic on the ground. Troops insufficiently massed and

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* Pantheon, 640 pp., $27.95. The book's subtitle is "The Inside Story of the Invasion and Occupation of Iraq."

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prepared were plopped directly down on the battlefield. Long, vulnerable supply lines stretched perilously from Kuwait hundreds of miles to the south to beyond Baghdad in the north. With no margin of reserves behind them, armored spearheads were forced to bypass rather than to occupy and hold conquered ground. That, in turn, explains why the insurrection could not be immediately put down in the war's aftermath:

> Instead of making plans to fight a counterinsurgency, the President and his team drew up plans to bring the troops home and all but declared the war won. There is a direct link between the way the Iraq war was planned and the bitter insurgency the American-led coalition subsequently confronted.

Third, Gordon and Trainor charge that the administration did not plan properly for reconstruction, wrongly thinking that Iraq would turn out to be a rapid success story like Afghanistan, or that an American proconsul and provisional government could quickly establish a transition to democratic rule. When, on May 1, 2003, George Bush landed on the *U.S.S. Abraham Lincoln* to declare that "major combat operations in Iraq have ended," he had little idea that 2,000 combat dead, billions of dollars, and three Iraqi elections later, the country would still not be secure.

Here once again the authors place a large share of the blame on Rumsfeld, who allegedly browbeat Franks into declaring that thousands of American soldiers could be withdrawn almost immediately after the initial cessation of hostilities. From the military's point of view, write Gordon and Trainor, civilian leadership could be forgiven for having geopolitical considerations that necessitated saving reserves for other contingencies. What was unpardonable was the idea that, on principle, there *should* be only a limited number of troops available. The price of this operational madness was paid by officers in the field. It was they who had to lead their inadequate forces into battle, and who subsequently lacked the manpower to rectify the critical postwar lapses.

AS A BOOK, *Cobra II* reads well, reflecting both Gordon's brave battle reporting under fire and Trainor's long familiarity with military operations and invaluable contacts with ranking officers. Writing a book like this involves burdensome travel, real danger, and an ability to navigate one's way through participants' personal, and often hidden, agendas. Both authors spent time interviewing hundreds of subjects, here and in the Middle East; clearly, it was not easy to forge a synthesis when so much of the evidence they gathered was either fragmentary or contradictory.

For all their fault-finding, moreover, Gordon and Trainor convey an invaluable impression of tens of thousands of American soldiers hell-bent for Baghdad from their far distant starting point in Kuwait and miraculously deposing Saddam Hussein in three weeks' time. Rumsfeld's idea of a "rolling start" often took literal form: for the first time in U.S. military history, a mechanized unit flew nonstop from a base in the United States to enemy country, landed near the battlefield, and then drove right off to the fight. Even American psychological operations, an often over-hyped element of war-fighting, worked well: when American planes showered leaflets on it, an entire Iraqi division guarding Baghdad more or less melted away, leaving behind only 2,000 of its original 13,000 combatants.

From postbellum interviews of Iraqi leaders, the authors are able to reveal that Saddam's own generals did not realize that Iraq's arsenals of weapons of mass destruction were mere fantasies, or had become so by the time the war began. Meanwhile, however, our own intelligence concerning Saddam's whereabouts was dismal, leading to a series of much publicized strikes that never came close to killing either him or members of his family. As the war progressed, *fedayeen* in SUV's outfitted with machine guns and in pick-up trucks with RPG's, though capable of offering little or no resistance to our rapid advance, were already learning how to take advantage of the restrictive rules of American engagement and of our reluctance to alienate Iraqi public opinion. Once the lethal Americans had passed by, or returned in the role of benign peacekeepers, the *fedayeen* easily regrouped and reemerged as nationalist guerrillas.

For reporting all this well and vividly, *Cobra II* has much to recommend it. Beyond that, however, all is questionable, to say the least. The book announces itself as an insider's history, but one distinguished by the scholarly rigor lacking in such purely journalistic accounts as Bob Woodward's *Plan of Attack* (2004). Yet, despite its over 400 endnotes, almost 40 pages of internal documents, and some explanation of the source materials on which it is based, a Woodwardian flavor pervades the whole.

There is, for example, no bibliography—a telling fault in the absence of evidence that the authors, if only for purposes of gaining perspective, have drawn on many prior military histories or studies of the Middle East. The index is poor, consisting mostly of names and places; long entries are not broken down into subsections, and important topics and themes (e.g., "weapons of mass destruction," "Shiite," etc.) are missing entirely. A book whose subtitle promises a history not only of the three-week invasion but also of the years-long occupation has but one index reference to Muqtadr al-Sadr.

Far more disturbingly, sources are often cited only as "Interview,

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former senior military officer," "Interview, former senior officer," "Interview, former Centcom planner," "Interview, Pentagon Officials," "Interview, U.S. State Department Official," or the like, and in some cases simply as "Notes of a participant." The veracity of these multiple, anonymous, and often hostile sources can never be checked.

We have learned from Bob Woodward that, in Washington, he who talks often gets to adjudicate whose story is heard and with what degree of authorial deference it will be put forward. *Cobra II* is a critical take on the administration's entire conduct of the war, yet the authors did not interview the major architects: George W. Bush, Dick Cheney, Donald Rumsfeld, Paul Wolfowitz, L. Paul Bremer III, General Richard B. Myers, or General Tommy Franks. They did, however, draw heavily on these men's critics, both early and late: Brent Scowcroft, General Jay Garner, Paul Pillar, Lawrence Wilkerson, General Anthony Zinni, and others.

Have the courage and good sense of Generals David McKiernan and William S. Wallace been enhanced in the telling by the fact that Michael Gordon was embedded with the staff of the former and enjoyed almost unlimited access to the corps officers of the latter? To what degree were these officers consciously aware that their special guest was monitoring their behavior for his book? For that matter, how is it that Douglas Feith, the former Undersecretary of Defense for Policy, who is frequently scapegoated as the prime culprit for what went wrong after April 2003, is treated so charitably by the usually hypercritical Gordon and Trainor? The endnotes, not surprisingly, reveal that Feith, almost alone in the administration, chose to give his side to the authors.

IF SUCH selectivity in itself is insufficient to raise doubt over the reliability of key parts of *Cobra II*, there are the authors' three major themes to consider.

Was, for instance, the decision to go to war taken abruptly and without real cause? Gordon and Trainor do not even inquire whether the ties between al Qaeda and Saddam's intelligence agencies, which had prompted formal condemnation from both the Clinton administration and the Senate, might not have been a worthy *casus belli* in a post-September 11 world. Although they do mention the Senate's October 11, 2002 resolution, passed overwhelmingly, which authorized war against Iraq on 23 counts, what they emphasize is that John Kerry, who voted yes, had been given off-the-record and soon-to-be broken assurances by Colin Powell that force would be a last resort.

In fact, Senate speeches of the time reveal something else: a strong bipartisan desire to complete the goal of regime change that had been authorized four years earlier during the Clinton administration. Nothing abrupt there. At war's end, moreover, Democratic legislators and 70 percent of the public wholeheartedly applauded the removal of Saddam Hussein; subsequent objections would center not on the three-week victory that many were happy to claim as their own but the messy three-year peace they became only too eager to attribute to others.

Nor do Gordon and Trainor credit the still more telling fact that, following the Afghanistan campaign in the fall of 2001, some *fifteen months* of national and worldwide discussion ensued concerning Iraq, including the excruciatingly drawn-out United Nations debate. Rarely, in truth, has the United States conducted so prolonged and so public a discussion about its intentions in the run-up to any war.

The authors are more on target in dwelling on the administration's preoccupation with weapons of mass destruction at the expense of other, more compelling writs for action. As they point out, the WMD issue warped the public presentation of the war and later diverted some resources away from reconstruction to numerous wild-goose chases after nonexistent or no longer existent arsenals. Yet even here there is a disconnect in their version of the WMD issue—attributable, no doubt, to the selectivity of their sources. While suggesting deceit on the part of an administration bent on overplaying a fanciful danger, they do not question the sincerity of General Franks's frantic efforts to warn his commanders about the impending threat of chemical and biological attack.

The authors' second and third themes—supposedly critical mistakes in troop levels and troop deployment both during and after the war—are in essence one. When it comes to them, little analysis, let alone counterargument, is on offer. *Why* did a deployment strategy that had worked in Afghanistan fail—if it did fail—in Iraq? After all, there had been even less planning in the case of the former campaign, and American planners had good reason to believe that Iraq's restive Shiites and Kurds were just as anxious for regime change as embattled warlords in Afghanistan.

As for troop levels, were these predicated entirely on Rumsfeld's pet theories, as Gordon and Trainor maintain, or rather on a more general acknowledgement of limited U.S. resources after the vast cutbacks in conventional forces of the 1990's, coupled with newfound worries of possible additional commitments cropping up unexpectedly in Syria, North Korea, and Iran? No one disputed, furthermore, that the recent technological revolution in smart air and ground weapons had translated into greater lethality per soldier or airman. Did that dictate a need for fewer, more, or about the same number of on-the-ground shooters as in the 1990's?

And what about the supposed lessons of Vietnam, which purport-

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edly worked against Rumsfeld's views? In fact, the massive U.S. troop presence on the ground in Vietnam in the late 1960's, with its enormous bureaucratic and logistical support, had not always conduced to a safer environment for American forces or a more viable South Vietnamese defense establishment than did the far smaller footprint we maintained there after 1971, when Vietnamization, fewer ground troops, and more audacious air support proved more effective against the North Vietnamese.

Instead of dwelling so much on troop levels, Gordon and Trainor might have done better to ask other, more relevant questions. To what degree did the inability of the 4th Infantry division to head south from Turkey mean not merely that the Sunni Triangle was not immediately attacked but that it never really became a theater of war whose Iraqi combatants would learn the hard wages of fighting Americans? Given the rapid American victory and the directive to avoid killing not merely civilians but enemy soldiers as well, was there, perhaps, an inescapable Catch-22 in Iraq—as if an enemy humiliated and fleeing, but never really conquered, could ever make an easy subject for radical reconstruction? Iraq, after all, was supposed to be less like World War II Germany than like World War II Italy—liberated from an unpopular dictator, rather than punished and made to suffer the wages of its aggression.

AS A JOURNALISTIC account of the three-week war, this book is of undeniable value. Interviews with dozens of officers below the rank of one-star general lend the story a gritty, ground-eye vantage point. There are also firsthand interviews with the rank-and-file that will be of lasting archival use to future historians.

But, despite the promise of the subtitle, we do not get a judicious assessment of the origins of the Iraqi war, the immediate causes that led up to the hostilities, or the complex and ongoing issues of the occupation. Indeed, the chapters devoted to the period after April 2003 take up only about 50 of the book's 500 or so pages of text, as if appended as an afterthought. And even the pages on the war itself are focused disproportionately, as we have seen, on American ignorance and arrogance. For two such veteran observers of combat, there is an oddly utopian strain in this presentation—as if going 7,000 miles into the heart of the ancient caliphate, taking out a mass murderer in three weeks, and then birthing three elections at the cost of 2,300 American fatalities might not be considered successful in the long and tragic annals of military history.

Like the invasion of Iraq itself, *Cobra II* takes its title from the American breakout in Normandy that commenced on July 25, 1944 with several days of strategic and tactical bombing designed to blast a hole through German lines and free General Omar Bradley's forces from a bloody six-week stalemate in the hedgerows. By way of explaining their choice of title, the authors note that General McKiernan's thrust to Baghdad emulated George S. Patton's explosive drive south and then east across France. But they might have reminded their readers that the sum total of all the errors committed by American planners and generals in Iraq pales in comparison with the tragic inauguration of the original Cobra campaign. Then, poor planning and execution led to two accidental American airstrikes on friendly troops, resulting in 111 dead and 490 wounded, plus the (covered-up) death of Lieutenant General Leslie J. McNair, the highest ranking American fatality in the entire European theater.

That is indicative of the way in which *Cobra II*, despite its allusion to Patton, is not really history. We never learn which benchmarks of the past, if any, are useful in assessing the race to Baghdad and what followed, to what degree the errors we committed were normal or exceptional in wars of this magnitude, or whether the authors' preferred solutions might not themselves pose just as many problems, if not worse ones.

Gordon and Trainor close on a trite note: "The price for the American and allied troops, and for the Iraqis themselves . . . was higher than it need have been: chaos, suffering, and a future that is still vexed." Vexed? Yes, of course—but this tossed-off banality is true for the aftermath of almost all of America's much bloodier and more error-prone conflicts, from the failed post-Civil War reconstruction and the fiasco that ensued from not occupying Germany after World War I to the loss of Eastern Europe in 1946 and the stalemate that was Korea. The present war, so roundly criticized in *Cobra II*, developed from a past strategic error—leaving Saddam in power. That decision was rightly criticized in the authors' earlier book. But if it was wrong to leave Saddam in power then, why was it even worse to have taken him out later?

The authors' failure to notice this irony suggests an underlying blind spot: what interests them is not policy—in this case, whether and how to deal with the menace of Saddam Hussein—but rather the supposedly inept and out-of-touch decision-making of those in authority in Washington. Thus, the troop-level controversy, which frames the entire book, is presented as a divide between, on the one hand, pie-in-the-sky civilian theorists and toadying careerists and, on the other, hardheaded veteran middling officers. Throughout, their criticisms are advanced in the name of these officers: angry majors, colonels, and subordinate generals who feel they were talked down to by the obsequious and politically-minded four-star brass, and who then had to hide

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the truth from their own men and the public at large.

Relying on the partial (in every sense) testimony of these men, Gordon and Trainor assure us that "the bitter insurgency American and British forces confront today was not preordained. There were lost opportunities, military and political, along the way." How do they know this? "The commanders and troops who fought the war explained them to us." All honor to those commanders and troops whom the authors chose to talk to; but the essential task of the historian is otherwise, and these pages hardly begin to address it.

Decline, Italian-Style

Mauro Lucentini

THE NATIONAL elections in Italy this past April ended in an even split. By the narrowest margin in Italian history (.06 percent), an aggregate of leftist parties fronted by Romano Prodi, a former prime minister, edged out the center-Right coalition led by Silvio Berlusconi's Forza Italia party—a coalition that, in slightly different incarnations, had governed Italy for seven months in 1994-95 and then without interruption for the past five years. In Italy's Senate, the Berlusconi coalition received a slight (0.2 percent) majority but lost anyway as a consequence of a complex system of seat allotments. But Forza Italia, which itself garnered 24 percent of the national vote, actually emerged from the elections as the largest single political party in Italy.

This Florida-style outcome, which has thrust Italy into profound confusion, could not have come at a worse time. The country's economy has been in a gradual but relentless tailspin that is now approaching the point of national emergency. As recently as the 1970's, Italy could boast of having displaced England as the third most productive country in the world. Today it finds itself at the very bottom of the group of industrialized nations, on the verge of falling into the ranks of the developing world. Last year, it occupied the slot just above Botswana in the World Economic Forum's annual index of economic competitiveness.

Italy's problems include a record public deficit, an unsustainable pension system, an aging work force, a light-industry sector reeling under Asian assault, and a steady deterioration in the national infrastructure (airports, rail network, roads, and the like). Demographically the country is in the basement, with the number of annual deaths exceeding births. According to a recent report in the *Financial Times*, it may even be forced to abandon the Eurozone (as the nations using the euro and subject to the EU's budgetary strictures call themselves), until now the only significant restraint on a ballooning public deficit.

PARLOUS THOUGH Italy's condition may be, concern for it hardly inhibited a post-election free-for-all. After the initial results came in, Berlusconi repeatedly proposed a government of national unity or some other arrangement suggestive of cooperation between the two halves of Italy's divided body politic. Unsurprisingly, Prodi and his allies—a long-entrenched political class that has ached for unimpaired restoration to power—reacted icily to the idea.

Their response reflected, among other things, the Italian Left's utter disdain for Berlusconi and all he represents. In the eyes of the Left, Berlusconi is not a statesman but an aberration—a criminal tycoon, a shameless monopolist, a reactionary clown whose verbal gaffes, hair plugs, and facelift are a national embarrassment. His elimination as

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prime minister was met by a sigh of relief: Italy would again have, in Prodi's words, a "*governo serio*"—a serious government.

But Prodi probably spoke too soon. To begin with, the winners, less a genuine coalition than a sprawling assemblage encompassing everything from center-Left Catholics to hard-line Communists, were unable to achieve a viable power-sharing agreement among themselves, and may not have succeeded in doing so by the time this article is published. Further complicating matters, Carlo Azeglio Ciampi, Italy's eighty-five-year-old president, whose mandate was to expire at the end of May, announced that he would relinquish his office promptly, even though renewal for another term was considered a near-certainty. In doing so, the president, a figurehead whose powers nevertheless include the appointment of ministers, appeared determined to pass the buck to his successor. Unless he were to change his mind, this would render even more unlikely the prompt installation of a new cabinet.

As for the ever-truculent Berlusconi, after mounting an obstinate challenge to the election results, complete with allegations of fraud, he promised a "hard" opposition to the Prodi regime "not only within . . . parliament but outside." Setting aside the possibility of serious social unrest, or a miracle along the lines of Germany's recent *Grosse Koalition*, the more likely outcome is that the dust will eventually settle on another of those fleeting governments so typical of post-Fascist Italy. Not for nothing is it said that Italians change governments the way other people change their underwear.

IN TRYING to understand what the April elections wrought, one can do worse than to contemplate their most striking feature: the tightest conceivable outcome produced in the face of widespread predictions of a landslide defeat for Berlusconi and triumph for the Left. This is especially interesting when one considers that Berlusconi's great weakness was said to lie in his profoundly unpopular decision to join the United States-led coalition in Iraq in 2003. But as voters well know, the bulk of Italy's many problems lie not in its foreign policy, which is nearly irrelevant, but in the domestic sphere. Iraq notwithstanding, the impressive results scored by Berlusconi suggest that when it comes to addressing those core problems, a majority of Italians continue to trust him over his many detractors.

Seeking to make sense of the close vote, media pundits in Italy and the United States have resorted to pop psychology, theorizing that "Italians, at bottom, are a conservative people," or that the Italian electorate harbors a "secret sense of sympathy for Berlusconi." In fact, however, Italians are anything but a "conservative people." To the contrary, leftist attitudes and mores have been all but pervasive, at all levels, throughout the country's post-Fascist history. Even today, in 2006, calling someone a "*conservatore*" is akin to calling him a reactionary, and the expression "man of the Right" is close to an insult; Italian conservatives themselves avoid the label.

No less difficult to accept is the notion that Berlusconi exerts some sort of secret attraction over the Italian people. In reality, far from mindlessly sympathizing with Berlusconi's personality, most Italians evince a pragmatic appreciation both of Berlusconi the man, defects and all, and of his accomplishments in office, controversial and imperfect as they were.

There is certainly no denying those imperfections, evident not least in Berlusconi's lackluster handling of the economy—the very sector that this successful businessman had promised would be the showcase of his administration. But there is also no denying that he did try. His first attempt at economic reform, a plan to liberalize labor regulations, cost the life of the adviser who had devised it, the economist Marco Biagi, who was murdered in early 2002 by remnants of the Red Brigades terrorist group. A substantially watered-down version of the plan was ultimately enacted. It resulted in reducing unemployment to its present rate of 7.7 percent, which is hardly the worst in Western Europe.

But that was about all. An elaborate proposal to alleviate fiscal pressure on growth was defeated almost in its entirety. No headway was possible in reforming the steeply progressive income tax, or on overhauling Italy's profoundly burdensome and unsustainable pension system, the most extravagant in the Western world. Nor could anything be done about the inefficient and increasingly expensive health system, whose fortunes admittedly depend more on regional authorities than on the national government. Stabs at improving infrastructure were impeded by local interests, by fears of ecological damage, or by lack of funds.

ARGUABLY, THESE failures were due less to any lack of will or competence on the part of Berlusconi than to the unstable nature of his own political coalition (as eclectic as the one that currently defines the Left), combined with the determined actions of his opponents to block him at every turn. Not surprisingly, these are the same interests, loosely speaking, that have been seeking to impede progress toward economic modernization elsewhere in Europe as well. What Berlusconi faced was not so different from what the Chirac government in France encountered in its recent effort to achieve some flexibility in French labor laws. In each country, a center-Right government found itself subject to the blackmail of an "activist" class intent on halting any effort to increase personal responsibility in the workplace, restrict the power of the unions, or mitigate the artificial rigidities of the labor market.

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Leading news media in Europe and the U.S. have devoted thoughtful attention to the quandaries of Chirac and Villepin in the face of mass protests organized by the ossified Left. Unfortunately, little comprehension, let alone sympathy, has been extended to Berlusconi on the same grounds. This is a great pity, for his attempts at economic reform were genuine, and his inability to see them through was symptomatic of much that ails Europe as a whole. But then France is France, while Italy—well, Italy is still widely regarded as a nation of mandolin players and pizza makers, and Berlusconi, who worked as a singer on cruise ships before becoming the 37th richest man in the world, is just a buffoon. Or so we have been led to think.

ANY FINAL judgment of Berlusconi is bound to be ambiguous, but certain facts may help in comprehending his life and career.

To begin with, he never pretended to be a professional politician. A bit like Ross Perot, he entered politics only upon becoming convinced that there was no one else competent or willing to head the forces of the emerging center-Right in Italy. His rise began in the mid-70's, when the country had entered a period of widespread unemployment, turmoil, and violence, highlighted in 1978 by the kidnap-assassination of Prime Minister Aldo Moro.

In those years, Berlusconi, then in his early forties, was drawing on his experience as an entertainer and disc jockey to build the foundations of a media empire. It was said at the time that in Italy you could go nowhere in business, especially if you were just starting out, unless you were prepared to grease the palm of the political mafia so as to bypass the calcified bureaucracy and extortionate regulatory apparatus. The most durable government of the time was headed by Bettino Craxi, a self-styled "socialist" who managed to suppress the terrorist groups but who also, true to form, operated a personal clearing house by means of which he transferred millions of dollars in proceeds from government corruption to Swiss bank accounts.

It was with Craxi that Berlusconi had most of his dealings. The major result of these was the repeal of a law mandating a single, state-controlled television network—the last such law on the books of any developed country. It is typical of Berlusconi's methods that, even as he served his own interests by establishing the first private television network in Italian history, he simultaneously made possible a major advance toward a sine qua non of a functioning democracy, namely, freedom of expression. By going into competition with the state, he also furnished himself with a useful tool for spreading the sort of free-market, anti-regulation, small-government ideas that in the United States were gaining strength with the growth of Reaganism.

The 70's also saw the first conservative reaction in Italy to the semi-anarchic conditions created by successive left-wing governments. This principally took the form of a movement headed by Italy's most famous journalist, Indro Montanelli, who in 1974 founded *Il Giornale*, the first reputable newspaper of right-wing opposition. Based in Milan, the capital of business and industry, and fueled by the same aspirations then spreading in the industrial milieu, *Il Giornale* enjoyed a period of growing popularity in which it was instrumental in putting a stop to the Communist effort to enter the government.

In search of financial support, Montanelli found it in Berlusconi, who had started his own campaign for the modernization of the Italian economy. Their collaboration flourished for over a decade, until public resentment of entrenched government misrule gave rise in 1992 to the so-called "clean-hands" revolution and the swift collapse of the left-wing political parties that had dominated Italy since 1946.

Faced with a tabula rasa, Berlusconi now sought to convince Montanelli to enter the political arena. When the latter declined, Berlusconi, despite his lack of political experience, decided to go ahead on his own. At the time, a substantial part of the Italian Right was still confined to the political ghetto. But the efficiency and rapidity with which Berlusconi organized his new party demonstrated a talent for political action, and the 1994 elections brought him to the first of his two premierships—short-lived, but a prelude of things to come.

Did he, as some allege, enter government as a means of shielding his companies from bankruptcy and avoiding prosecution for past business misdeeds? There may be an element of truth here, but it has never been proved. Berlusconi himself has argued that, had he not found "refuge" in power, he would have been unable to defend himself against a slew of false accusations intended to cut short his political ambitions. He has also been harshly criticized for failing to relinquish control of his television empire once in power; indeed, he added to it by acquiring the influence routinely exercised by the Italian government over the state television network, RAI. But here too there are extenuating circumstances, including legal ones. In any case, whatever monopoly Berlusconi may have enjoyed over the airwaves has to be balanced against the formidable array of the Italian print media—an impregnable redoubt of the Left for the last six decades.

IN SUM, if so many Italians remain prepared to cast their lot with Berlusconi, with all of his faults, there must be solid reasons for it.

For one thing, many clearly found comfort in the fact that the second Berlusconi administration presented that rarity in Italian politics: a government capable of stay-

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ing in power for the full five years of its constitutionally authorized mandate. For another thing, during the years that Berlusconi and Forza Italia dominated the scene, Italians were finally able to repudiate their longstanding and hopelessly corrupt system of power-sharing among parties and to adopt something approaching the Anglo-American division of politics into two blocs. However weak, the present coalitions represent a significant advance over the preceding decades of political fragmentation.

For still another, related thing, it is beyond cavil that, in the Berlusconi years, Italians were able to glimpse for the first time the beginning of the end of an entire national life based on clientelism, sinecures, and the political misappropriation of all lucrative positions. Last but not least, the Berlusconi years proved how utterly baseless were the hysterical predictions of an imminent return to Italian Fascism. To the contrary, the participation in national politics of the center-Right—a substantial sector of public opinion that had been ostracized for a half-century after Fascism's demise—actually helped bring closure to one of the most divisive chapters in Italian history.

These are no slight achievements, and if the April elections proved anything, it is that Italians are not as prepared to overlook them as Berlusconi's opponents would desire. In the final analysis, half of Italy's voters still support Berlusconi because, while their love affair with him may be over, their dislike and fear of his adversaries remain very much alive.

The truly disturbing fact is that the winners in the April elections were the same types and in some cases the same persons who, during their long decades in control, set the stage for the economic disaster now coming to a head—and, in the last five years, effectively preempted most of Berlusconi's reformist agenda. The *Financial Times* (as reported in the Italian press) may have put it best in calling the Prodi alliance victory "the opposite of what is needed now." In fact, nothing about those who now hope to attain exclusive power in Italy augurs a performance even remotely adequate to the monumental problems the country is facing.

In view of the wider and not dissimilar problems affecting the European Union as a whole, Italy's experience, with all of its local peculiarities, is of far more than local interest.

Music

Stravinsky & Co.

Terry Teachout

At first glance, Igor Stravinsky appears to be the ideal subject for a biographer. He led an eventful life, traveled widely, knew many celebrities and was one himself, published a memoir and several other books, and left behind an extensive correspondence. All of this, taken together, constitutes raw material sufficient for the making of a readable biography that, one might suppose, would all but write itself.

In Stravinsky's case, however, appearances are deceiving. He was, to begin with, multilingual, and his first language, Russian, is not widely spoken in the West, save by émigrés and specialists. Many of the primary sources for a Stravinsky biography are thus intelligible only to Russian-speakers, while most of the rest require a fluent knowledge of both English and French. Prior to the collapse of the Soviet Union, Western scholars did not have access to essential source materials pertaining to the first part of Stravinsky's life, and his own autobiographical writings, which were part and parcel of his long-term project of (as I once put it) "cultivating an image of stylistic statelessness,"

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are—to put it mildly—not always trustworthy.[1]

In addition, much of what we "know" about Stravinsky has been filtered through the published writings of Robert Craft, his longtime assistant and amanuensis, who inevitably brought his own agenda to bear in writing about the genius he served. Craft has spent much of the past half-century zealously promulgating his version of the events of Stravinsky's crowded life and doing his best to discredit anyone who begs to differ with him.

Fortunately, some of the obstacles to writing about Stravinsky were removed in 1986 by the long-awaited opening to scholars of his private papers and manuscripts, followed a decade later by the publication of Richard Taruskin's *Stravinsky and the Russian Traditions*, an exhaustively detailed study of Stravinsky's profound and lifelong indebtedness to his Russian heritage. Then, in 1999, Stephen Walsh, a British musicologist, brought out *A Creative Spring: 1882-1934*, the first installment of a two-volume biography by a writer who, working independently from Craft, has sought to provide a factually reliable account of the composer's life. Not surprisingly, Craft, who once went so far as to claim that he was the only person competent to write a life of Stravinsky (though he never did so), dismissed Walsh's first volume as a "bungled" effort. Most other reviewers, myself included, disagreed.

NOW WALSH has brought out the second and final volume of *Stravinsky*, subtitled *The Second Exile: France and America, 1934-1971*.[2] Presumably Robert Craft will have something to say about *The Second Exile* in due course; he figures prominently in its pages, where his writings on Stravinsky and his family are bluntly described by Walsh as "riddled with bias, error, supposition, and falsehood."

I also expect that Stravinsky scholars will spend much of the coming year wrangling over *The Second Exile*, and some will no doubt find that its author, like all biographers, has made his share of minor errors (though I myself have found none). Be that as it may, *The Second Exile*, like its predecessor, is an inspiring piece of work, at once comprehensive and beguilingly well written. After two careful readings, I feel safe in ranking it—alongside David Cairns's *Berlioz*, Lewis Lockwood's *Beethoven: The Music and the Life*, and Anthony Tommasini's *Virgil Thomson: Composer on the Aisle*—as one of the finest biographies of a classical composer to be published in the modern age of musical scholarship.

One of the things that makes *The Second Exile* so readable is that Walsh has struck a near-ideal balance between life and work, integrating succinct yet acute descriptions of Stravinsky's major compositions into a smoothly flowing narrative. Like *A Creative Spring*, it is meant to be accessible to the general reader. (Indeed, in what seems to me the book's only real shortcoming, Walsh has gone so far as to omit notated musical examples altogether.) Yet there is nothing superficial about Walsh's approach to Stravinsky's music. Not only has he thought deeply about it, but he has succeeded in relating it meaningfully to the circumstances of its creation, one of the hardest tasks with which the biographer of a great artist must grapple.

A case in point is Walsh's discussion of the *Symphony in C* (1938-40), the masterpiece of the later phase of Stravinsky's neoclassical period, premiered by the Chicago Symphony after he pulled up stakes for the second time in his life and emigrated from France to the U.S.:

> Conducting symphony concerts all over provincial America, Stravinsky had become conscious of the intensely conservative world he was invading, and what an incongruous figure he cut in it. . . . What sort of work might he himself contribute to such a culture? The obvious answer was a symphony: a symphony in C, of course—like Beethoven's first and Mozart's last, the purest, most archetypical, most classical, above all least frightening kind of orchestral concert work.

This is but one instance of Walsh's admirable ability to place Stravinsky and his music in a broader cultural context without diminishing the autonomous significance of the music itself. We are left in no doubt that the *Symphony in C* is an important work, but at the same time we are given an illuminating glimpse of the way in which the world in and through which Stravinsky moved helped to shape that work.

Walsh proves no less adept at conveying the force of Stravinsky's outsized personality, writing memorably of "the copious whiskies and idiosyncratic diets, the tiny, gnome-like stature, the large ears, the pantomime English, and the sudden, unforgettable smiles, emerging like the sun from behind a cloud on a windy day." Just as important, he has a gift for sketching such crucial supporting figures as the choreographer George Balanchine, whose ballets were largely responsible for introducing Stravinsky's later scores to the general public, and the poet W.H. Auden, with whom the composer collaborated on the Hogarth-based opera *The Rake's Progress* (1947-51). It would be hard to pack more insight into fewer words than Walsh does in remarking that "like

[1] "The Real Stravinsky" (COMMENTARY, July 2000). That essay also contains a select discography of important Stravinsky recordings made by artists other than the composer. Most of Stravinsky's own recorded performances from the 30's and 40's, which as a rule are musically superior to his LP-era recordings for Columbia, are currently out of print in the U.S., though copies of Andante's recently discontinued three-volume *Igor Stravinsky: Composer and Performer* series are still available through amazon.com and other dealers.

[2] Knopf, 709 pp., $40.00.

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Stravinsky himself [Auden] had a brilliant associative mind that was quick to see the familiar in the strange, the new in the old." Such incisive portraiture is the stuff of great biography, and it is here in abundance.

A BIOGRAPHER'S FIRST duty is to the truth. In *A Creative Spring*, Walsh dealt frankly with such unsavory aspects of Stravinsky's life as his anti-Semitism and his attraction to Italian fascism. In *The Second Exile*, he takes on the hardly less touchy topic of the composer's complex relations with the members of his family and his various professional associates—as well as with Robert Craft, who over time became enmeshed in a quasi-filial relationship with both Stravinsky and Vera Sudeykina, the composer's mistress and later his second wife.

Like so many artists, Stravinsky used his friends and colleagues ruthlessly and discarded them when they ceased to serve his purpose. *The Second Exile*, like *A Creative Spring* before it, is in part a chronicle of their comings and goings. Though Walsh is at all times scrupulously fair, giving the composer his due wherever appropriate, it is impossible not to be appalled at times by Stravinsky's sheer opportunism.[3] Walsh appears to be no less fair in his portrayals of the Stravinsky children, who seem to have been no more able to count on him, either psychologically or financially, than is common among the offspring of famous parents—few of whom, in addition, ever quite manage to escape the shadow of second-hand renown.

Stravinsky's son Soulima, an accomplished pianist in his own right, eventually pulled away from his father in an attempt to assert his independence. It was around the same time that Robert Craft, who met the composer in 1948 and became part of his household shortly thereafter, began to assume a larger role in the lives of the Stravinsky family. "We learned gradually," Soulima would recall, "that things were done through Craft. Craft wanted something. He told Vera, Vera told Igor, and Igor had his reaction accordingly. That was the pattern." In time the Stravinsky children came to suspect (in Walsh's words) that "their father was under Vera's and Craft's complete mental and physical control, brainwashed by them, effectively their prisoner."

WHETHER OR not anything like this was ever true, there can be no doubt that Craft did much to shape Stravinsky's postwar career. *The Second Exile* is the first thoroughgoing attempt by an independent scholar to determine exactly what he did, starting with an examination of the degree to which Craft was responsible for Stravinsky's published prose writings.

Stravinsky was a man of philosophical inclination but no particular power of systematic thought or expression, except through the medium of music. For this reason, he early on acquired the habit of collaborating with professional writers in order to set his views before the public, and both his *Autobiography* (1936) and *Poetics of Music* (1947) were written in large part, and without credit, by other people.

In 1956, Deborah Ishlon, a publicist at Columbia, Stravinsky's record label, interviewed the composer and on the next day gave him a verbatim transcript of their English-language talk. His answers to her questions were both vivid and utterly characteristic: "To be merely shocking is vulgar. It could not be the legal goal merely to be shocking. Music should be striking." Ishlon then suggested that he "write—or talk—a book," and three years later he and Craft did just that, publishing a slender volume of leading questions and pithy answers called *Conversations with Igor Stravinsky*. Its candor took the classical-music world by storm.

The first installment of what later came to be known as Stravinsky's "conversation books" was, unlike its predecessors, an openly acknowledged collaboration. Stravinsky told Ishlon that Craft "did write the book, it is his language, his presentation, his imagination, and his memory. . . . It's not a question of ghost writing but of somebody who is to a large extent creating me." In fact, as Walsh explains, Stravinsky appears to have been substantially responsible for the prose drafts that Craft later edited into the final version of the book, meaning that *Conversations with Igor Stravinsky* is "a fair reflection of [Stravinsky's] thoughts and memories at that time, even if the language is too slick and versatile, too innocent of the mistakes and eccentricities of his actual speech."

Later on, though, Craft gradually assumed full (if unadmitted) responsibility for the conversation books, into which he now incorporated previously published articles, reviews, letters, and program notes to which he had signed Stravinsky's name. Though written by Craft, some of these pieces, Walsh points out, "continue to be cited today as genuine by musicologists and others who ought by now to know better."[4] (The later volumes also included entries from Craft's diaries, attributed to him alone.)

[3] A typical anecdote concerns the complicitous relationship into which Stravinsky chivvied Catherine, his sickly first wife, and Vera, then his mistress: "Not only did Igor make his mistress an allowance, but he expected [Catherine] to hand the money over in person, which she dutifully did, meeting Vera at the bank and talking to her for a while in the car afterward."

[4] Craft has since admitted that he wrote all of the final conversation book, *Retrospectives and Conclusions* (1969). In addition, Walsh believes that the fifth volume, *Themes and Episodes* (1967), "probably contains nothing written by Stravinsky himself, and possibly not much that he ever actually said." As for the authenticity of the other volumes in the series, *Memories and Commentaries* (1960), *Expositions and Developments* (1962), and *Dialogues and a Diary* (1963), it is perhaps sufficient to note that Walsh dryly refers to their putative author as "the platonic Stravinsky." Some parts, to be sure, are more plausible-sounding than others, but none can be taken at face value.

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This charade continued even after the octogenarian composer, whose health was always fragile, had grown too frail to make any meaningful contribution to "his" writings, just as Craft became increasingly responsible for the studio recordings "conducted" by Stravinsky in the 60's for Columbia. It became customary for Craft to conduct the rehearsals for Stravinsky's recording sessions, which were also taped and incorporated into the finished albums that were then released under the composer's name.[5]

WHY DID Craft engage in such deceptions? By his own account, he and Vera wanted to keep the aging Stravinsky active for as long as possible, both for the sake of his own happiness and in order to ensure that his expenses remained tax-deductible (as would have ceased to be the case once his professional activities came to a close). Hence the continuing pretense that Stravinsky was "writing" articles that he only signed, as well as the orchestral concerts at which the composer conducted only such undemanding scores as *Firebird* or *Pulcinella*, leaving the later, more difficult pieces to Craft (whose presence on the podium was not always advertised in advance).

All of this is understandable, perhaps even forgivable, especially since Stravinsky, as Walsh makes clear, not only trusted Craft but came in time to view him with the affection of a father. In any case, it is of far less significance in the long run than the part played by Craft in Stravinsky's decision to abandon the neoclassicism of his middle years and embrace Arnold Schoenberg's 12-tone method of "serial" composition. This he had previously dismissed as the work of a talented but sterile craftsman who was (as Stravinsky put it in a pre-Craft interview) "a chemist of music more than an artistic creator."

In 1952, one year after the premiere of *The Rake's Progress*, the longest and most ambitious composition of his career, Stravinsky admitted to Craft that he had reached a creative dead end. As Walsh tells the story:

> [H]e broke down and wept. He was finished as a composer, he said; the *Rake* would be his last work. What was more, he felt exposed by Schoenberg's mastery and incriminated by the years in which he, Stravinsky, had written serialism off as some kind of fin-de-siècle number-mysticism or chemical experimentation. . . . It was a frightening moment of emptiness and fear for a man whose life had for fifty years been founded on composition, but who had also known the terrors of rejection and insecurity.

Craft responded by encouraging Stravinsky to experiment with serialism, and introduced him to the rigorously structured music of Schoenberg's pupil Anton Webern. Soon his creativity was restored, and he embarked on a series of compact, concentrated works in which he bent serialism to his own ends, including *Canticum sacrum* (1955) and *Threni* (1958), a pair of sacred works for vocal soloists, chorus, and orchestra; *Agon* (1957), a twenty-minute-long dance score commissioned by Lincoln Kirstein for Balanchine's New York City Ballet; *Movements* (1959), a miniature piano concerto in the halting, fragmentary style of Webern; and the even briefer *Variations: Aldous Huxley in Memoriam* (1965), his last piece of purely orchestral music.

The role played by Craft in Stravinsky's decision to embrace serialism soon became common knowledge in the music world, where it was widely believed that the older man had converted to a musical creed he despised solely in order to reclaim the limelight. "That's what happens when you invite the Devil (Robert Craft) into your home," Darius Milhaud quipped. Craft in turn made no secret of having steered Stravinsky toward Schoenberg and Webern, though he claimed that he had done no more than serve as a stylistic midwife, remarking in a published diary entry that nobody "could lead that horse to water, if it didn't want to go, let alone make it drink."

AFTER STRAVINSKY'S death, Craft changed his tune slightly, claiming that, from 1953 on, "every Stravinsky opus . . . was undertaken as a result of discussions between us." The two statements, as Walsh rightly observes, are not mutually contradictory. Stravinsky *was* strong-minded, and Craft did open his ears to the possibilities of serialism—such as they were. But even though the post-*Rake* compositions are self-evidently the work of the same artist who described his *Octet* (1923) as "dry, cold, and transparent, like a *triple sec* champagne," there is something missing from them, and that something is the ordering principle of tonality that had hitherto been central to Stravinsky's aesthetic.

To be sure, the later works have their critical admirers, including Walsh, who not only praises them (albeit judiciously) but even goes so far as to suggest that Robert Craft's "lesser frailties" are outweighed by the fact that without him they would not have been composed. Yet except for *Agon*, which survives mainly in its capacity as the score for one of Balanchine's best ballets, none of Stravinsky's later works has entered the concert repertoire. Nor does it now appear likely that they will be taken up by a new generation of performers. With the revival of tonality, time has passed them by.

Not so, the works of Stravinsky's early and middle periods, whose masterly qualities have never been

[5] According to Walsh and other reputable scholars, Craft's literary duplicity continued long after Stravinsky's death in 1971. Not only are the volumes of Stravinsky's correspondence and Vera's diaries that Craft prepared for publication textually untrustworthy in the extreme, but he even went so far as to rewrite successive editions of his own published diaries.

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more apparent. In Walsh's eloquently appreciative words:

> [U]ltimately this music that supposedly expresses nothing,[6] and always seemed studiously, impenetrably deaf to the world around it, has turned out to be the most exact echo and the best response to those terrifying years that brought it into being. . . . If these great messages had any single message for the sublunary world, it could only be that disorder—whether political or psychic—must be neutralized through stern formal control and a refusal of facile emotion.

That Stravinsky's music was intended as an artist's response to the encroaching chaos of modernity has long seemed to me obvious. If for reasons of his own he chose in old age to replace the natural order of tonality with the factitious and artificial "order" of serialism, the fact remains that his mistaken decision cannot diminish the endlessly self-renewing beauties of such masterworks as *Le Sacre du printemps*, *Les Noces*, *Apollo*, the *Symphony of Psalms*, the *Symphony in C*, the *Symphony in Three Movements*, and *Orpheus*. In them, one hears (as I wrote here in 2000) "unforgettably moving intimations of the divine order, enlivened by a surging, proliferating rhythmic vitality that gladdens the heart." And if, as we learn from Stephen Walsh, these intimations were vouchsafed to us by an all-too-human artist whose music was better than the man who made it, then we must chalk up the difference to the ennobling power of art—or grace.

[6] This refers to Stravinsky's claim (in the *Autobiography*) that "music is, by its very nature, powerless to *express* anything at all, whether a feeling, an attitude of mind, a psychological mood, a phenomenon of nature, etc."

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Israel and the United States

Is Israel an asset or a burden to our country?

The United States is without question Israel's most important ally. Also, without question, Israel is the staunchest and most reliable friend of the United States. But there are some who believe and vigorously advocate that Israel is a burden to the United States and that, were it not for Israel, peace would prevail in the Middle East.

What are the facts?

The "Israel lobby." A patriotic-named foundation urges, in full-page ads in national newspapers (very expensive – who pays for it?), to influence Congress to withhold support for Israel. Professors from prestigious universities write essays in which they aver that the United States is in thrall to the "Israel lobby." This lobby is said to pull the strings of American policy. Its supposed main promoters are AIPAC (American Israel Public Affairs Committee) and the so-called "neo-cons," some of whom are indeed Jewish. They are said to exert an almost magical spell over policy makers, including the leaders of Congress and the President. Some even say that the Iraq war was promoted by this omnipotent "Israel lobby," that the President was flummoxed into declaring war on Saddam Hussein, not in order to defend the United States or to promote its interests, but in order to further the interests of Israel.

> "Israel and the United States stand together in their fight against Islamo-fascist terrorism. These shared values will bind Israel and the United States forever."

Israel is indeed a major recipient of U.S. aid. Israel receives yearly $1.8 billion in military aid and $1.2 billion in economic aid, a substantial portion of our yearly aid budget. Almost all of the military aid is spent in the United States, making Israel one of the major customers of the U.S. defense industry. Virtually all of the economic assistance goes for repayment of debt to the United States, incurred from military purchases dating back many years.

America's staunchest ally. A good case can be made that aid to Israel, certainly the military portion, should be part of the United States defense budget, rather than of the aid budget because Israel is, next only perhaps to Britain, by far the most important ally of the United States. Virtually without exception, Israel's government and its people agree with and support the foreign policy objectives of the United States. In the United Nations, Israel's votes coincide with those of the United States over 90% of the time. The Arabs and other Moslem countries, virtually all of them recipients of American largess, almost reflexively vote against the United States in most instances.

Israel is the major strategic asset of the United States in an area of the world that is the cradle of Islamo-fascism, which is dominated by tyrants and permeated by religious obscurantism and shows almost total disregard for human rights. During the decades-long Cold War, Israel was America's indispensable rampart against the inroads of the Soviet Union. It is now the bulwark against the aggressive intentions of Iran. During Desert Storm, Israel provided invaluable intelligence, an umbrella of air cover for military cargo, and had personnel planted in the Iraqi deserts to pick up downed American pilots.

Gen. George Keagan, former head of U.S. Air Force Intelligence, stated publicly that "Israel is worth five CIAs," with regard to intelligence passed to our country. He also stated that the yearly $1.8 billion that Israel received in military assistance was worth $50 to $60 billion in intelligence, R&D savings, and Soviet weapons systems captured and transferred to the Pentagon. In contrast to our commitments in Korea, Japan, Germany, and other parts, not a single American serviceperson needs to be stationed in Israel. Considering that the cost of one serviceperson per year – including backup and infrastructure – is estimated to be about $200,000, and assuming a minimum contingent of 25,000 troops, the cost savings to the United States on that score alone is on the order of $5 billion a year.

Israel effectively secures NATO's southeastern flank. Its superb harbor, its outstanding military installations, the air and sea lift capabilities, and the trained manpower to maintain sophisticated equipment are readily at hand in Israel. It is the only country that makes itself available to the United States in any contingency. Yes, Israel is not a burden, but a tremendous asset to the United States.

Israel is indeed America's unsinkable aircraft carrier in the Middle East and the indispensable defender of America's interests in that area of the world. The people of the United States, individually and through their Congressional representatives, overwhelmingly support Israel in its seemingly unending fight against Arab aggression and Moslem terror. But that support is not based on the great strategic value that Israel represents to the United States. It is and always has been based on shared values of liberty, democracy, and human rights. America and Israel are aligned by their shared love of peace and democracy. Israel and the United States stand together in their fight against Islamo-fascist terrorism. These shared values, these common ideals, will bind Israel and the United States forever.

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Books in Review

Gaining Ground

In Our Hands:
A Plan to Replace
the Welfare State
by Charles Murray
AEI. 214 pp. $20.00

Reviewed by
Leslie Lenkowsky

CHARLES MURRAY first came to wide public attention in 1984 with his controversial book, *Losing Ground*. With a mixture of statistics and "thought experiments" involving a hypothetical couple named Harold and Phyllis, he argued that the anti-poverty programs of the 1960's had halted and then reversed the social and economic progress being made until then by the poor, especially African-Americans. The book's final chapter raised the audacious question of whether eliminating government assistance to the poor might not do more to solve the problem, by empowering those able to work and helping to put an end to the deepening culture of dependency.

Though initially provoking heated debate, *Losing Ground*'s main claim eventually became broadly accepted, contributing substantially to the changes in welfare policies of the late 1990's. These, by limiting access to public assistance, produced a dramatic decline in the number of people receiving welfare and a rise in the number of those gainfully employed.

But Murray himself never believed the changes went far enough, and the continuing woes of the welfare state have only confirmed his anxiety. His new book, *In Our Hands*, offers a remedy to those woes, which he has always seen as not just economic but moral and cultural in the broadest sense. Surprisingly, his plan would involve giving not just to the poor but to every adult American a sizable government check every year for life: in other words, a guaranteed income.

As MURRAY acknowledges, his plan is the latest incarnation of an idea first developed in the 1940's by the economist George Stigler and later embraced and popularized by Milton Friedman on the Right and Robert Lampman, a University of Wisconsin economist, on the Left. Known as the "negative income tax," it formed the basis of Richard M. Nixon's Family Assistance Plan, put forth in his very first year in office as the centerpiece of his domestic-policy agenda, then spearheaded by Daniel P. Moynihan. Presidents Ford and Carter later offered their own versions, as did national leaders in Britain, Canada, and other countries. None, however, enjoyed much success in getting the idea enacted. In the United States, the election of Ronald Reagan, who had opposed Nixon's plan, sounded its death knell.

In attempting to revive it now, Murray proposes to give $10,000 annually to every adult earning less than $25,000. Those crossing the income threshold of $25,000 would gradually receive less. At $50,000 of earnings, the payment would be reduced to a floor of $5,000, after which it would decline no more.

This is of course an expensive proposition. To pay for it, Murray would terminate all other forms of federal and state aid, not only to the elderly, the disabled, the unemployed,

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the sick, and the poor but also to farmers, students, public-housing tenants, children in day care, and a long list of businesses, nonprofits, and other groups that receive governmental assistance. According to Murray's calculations, the money realized by ending these programs would be almost enough to fund his proposal immediately. By 2011, he estimates, even with its sums adjusted annually for inflation, his plan would cost no more than the programs it is replacing (assuming they grow as much as currently projected). After another decade, it would be generating sizable surpluses.

Not only would the U.S. Treasury be better off under this arrangement, argues Murray, but so would most Americans. By investing a portion of their annual government checks in private savings accounts, including those managed ultra-conservatively, future retirees would usually wind up with higher pensions than they would enjoy under Social Security—and they would still be getting their guaranteed-income checks, too. Likewise, if they used some of their payments to purchase medical insurance, they would be able to obtain as much health care as they do now, and probably on a more economical basis—particularly if laws were put in place permitting the creation of low-cost medical clinics and eliminating subsidies for high-cost health plans.

Not only the middle class would come out ahead, but so, above all, would the working poor and the unemployed. Indeed, writes Murray, the plan would "end involuntary poverty": even after taking retirement and health-care payments into account, it would provide more money to most families than they receive from current assistance programs, even in the most generous states. The main exception would be single mothers without earnings, who (depending on where they live) might lose their eligibility for welfare and other specific benefits that currently exceed $10,000 annually.

IN ADDITION to the economic advantages he sees for his plan, Murray remains faithful to the larger view espoused in *Losing Ground*: namely, that the way government treats its citizens can strengthen, or weaken, families and communities. In his earlier book, he stressed that the rewards of programs like Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) had something to do with the proliferating incidence of single motherhood. Here, he predicts that a carefully calibrated guaranteed income might improve the behavior of young men otherwise tempted to abandon the women they had impregnated, since they would quickly discover how hard it was to hide their government checks from child-support collectors.

Murray sees a variety of other social pluses in the plan. With an annual income guarantee of $10,000 (or if married, $20,000), financially hard-pressed workers would have more leeway to move and change jobs, save for further education, or start a business. Couples would gain more freedom to make choices about marrying, becoming parents, or staying at home to raise children. With a greatly diminished set of government programs to turn to for help if they acted recklessly, more of them, Murray believes, would act responsibly. And the wholesale abolition of the welfare state could lead as well to a reinvigoration of the nation's charities, enabling them not only to do a better job of providing services to those who need them but also fostering the virtues of generosity and compassion and strengthening civic ties within communities.

WITH LARGE budget deficits looming inexorably, especially as "baby boomers" start to retire, all this would seem almost too good to be true. Given our current political stalemate, it probably is. But Murray, even while conceding the point, asks his readers to suspend judgment. After all, he suggests, if Social Security, Medicare, and other government programs continue as they are, their economic and social costs will in any case become so onerous that seemingly radical ideas like his can come to appear more feasible and, inevitably, more appealing.

Still, even on its own terms, it must be said that Murray's plan fails to solve the pivotal problem that has beset all previous efforts to create a negative income tax. Because of how its payments are calculated, such a tax can either provide adequate help to the needy or reinforce work and families. It cannot do both at the same time, at least not while keeping government spending under control.

Murray starts his plan at $20,000 for a couple that has no other income—a generous amount that would, in fact, put a two-parent family with two children above today's federal poverty line. But over half of our poor families are headed by a single parent. Such a parent would get only $10,000, an amount substantially below the poverty threshold and up to half of which would presumably have to be devoted to medical insurance and a retirement fund. Nor, in Murray's scheme, would there be supplemental sources of assistance, such as food stamps or housing allowances, other than what might be provided by charities, many of which would themselves have suffered financially from the elimination of federal spending on social programs.

To avoid this pitfall, one might contemplate increasing the initial payment. But since that would mean increasing payments across the board, not just to the poorest of the poor, it would entail its own problems, substantially increasing costs and at the same time diminishing the plan's work incentives. In the examples Murray provides, anyone crossing the income threshold of $25,000 would already lose approximately 60 percent of each additional dollar earned; only at earnings of $50,000 does the loss drop to 40 percent (approximately the current marginal tax rate at that in-

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come level). Raising the initial benefit to help single parents (or others with very low incomes) would only make this situation worse. Either the annual check would have to be phased down at an even faster rate, creating a discouragingly high tax burden for lower-middle-class recipients, or larger sums would have to go to a much bigger group of people, rapidly multiplying the program's total costs.

To his credit, Murray offers a number of ingenious explanations as to why these problems might not be insurmountable in reality. He also counters possible objections to the plan's purported effect on a person's incentive to work. According to research on negative-income-tax plans of the 60's and 70's, he writes, secondary earners—mainly spouses and teen-age children—are indeed likely to reduce their working hours when benefits are given, but a family's chief breadwinner is more apt to stay on the job full-time. To those who have suggested that a guaranteed income might actually increase divorce rates (since the money could be used as alimony), Murray responds that his own version could just as likely encourage families to stay together and thereby reduce the financial problems facing single mothers.

However these and other issues might play out in practice, it may be doubted whether even Charles Murray's considerable and well-deserved reputation as a social-policy analyst can rescue an idea so likely to stir deep-seated opposition from different quarters. Arguments advanced by Moynihan and others on behalf of earlier models of the negative income tax never managed to convince those certain they were either mean-spirited attempts to harm the poor or hare-brained notions that would wreak havoc on low-wage businesses. Nor should one minimize the difficulty of getting all 50 states, as well as the federal government, to agree to any such plan.

Nonetheless, it would be a mistake to be dismissive. Like *Losing Ground*, *In Our Hands* is a powerful "thought experiment," designed to push discussion of the problems of the welfare state past those perduring habits of mind that have blocked every effort to think seriously about the immense fiscal and social challenge that lies ahead of us. Like *Losing Ground*, too, it is informed by a profound moral vision of what makes for a healthy society and a self-confident citizenry. Fifteen years after *Losing Ground* was published, Murray's way-out ideas had not only become discussable, they were being framed into law. Could it happen again?

Pretending

Reckless Rites: Purim and the Legacy of Jewish Violence

by Elliot Horowitz

Princeton. 356 pp. $35.00

Reviewed by
Hillel Halkin

To announce in a book's subtitle that its topic is "the legacy of Jewish violence" is to promise a great deal. Although Elliot Horowitz, an associate professor of Jewish history at Bar-Ilan University in Israel, has written a study replete with interesting detail, this promise is not lived up to.

The thesis of *Reckless Rites*, which deals with the darker side of Jewish attitudes toward Christians and Christianity from late antiquity to modern times, is straightforward. Despite its being a commonplace to

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Hillel Halkin's *recent contributions to* Commentary *include "What Israel Did (and Did Not) Vote For" (May) and "Why Jews Laugh at Themselves" (April).*

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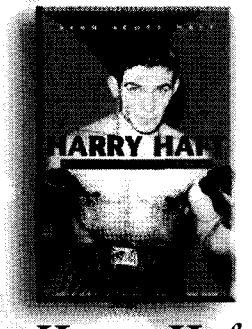

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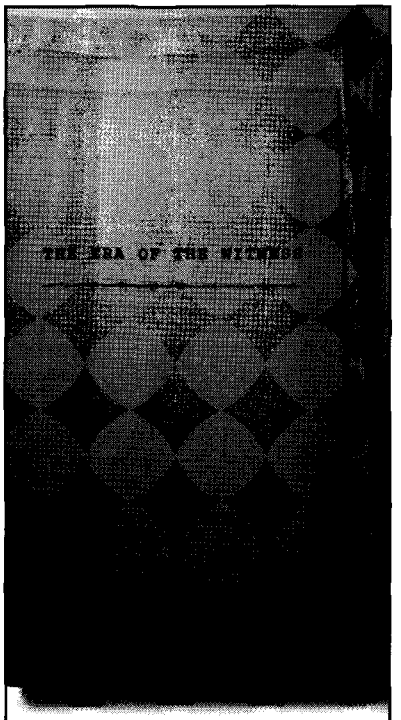

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Annette Wieviorka
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state that Jewish societies in Christian Europe were characterized by a strong aversion to physical violence and a very low level of it, Horowitz claims that such a characterization is misleading. In point of fact, he argues, Jews, as a religious minority in a Christian culture that treated them with contempt, not only harbored deep feelings of animosity toward Christians; they also, while generally keeping such feelings to themselves, acted them out annually on the one occasion that served for their ritual expression and release. This was the holiday of Purim, the annual celebration of the Jewish people's victory in ancient Persia over its arch-foe Haman—at the culmination of which, according to the biblical book of Esther, "the Jews smote all their enemies with the stroke of the sword, slaughtering and destroying them, and did what they would unto those that hated them."

Esther is the only book of the Bible in which there is no mention of God. And Purim, Horowitz contends, with its atmosphere of licentiousness that goes back to the early rabbis (who declared it a day on which Jews were encouraged to drink so much that they could "no longer tell Haman from Mordecai," Esther's protector and counselor), served the function in Jewish life that Carnival—which falls at the same time of year—served in Catholicism: as a licit opportunity for ribaldry and "transgressive" activities that violated the social and religious norms prevailing during the rest of the year. For Jews, the most daring of these activities was venting anger on Christians and even physically assaulting them.

Modern Jewish historians, Horowitz writes, have sought to play down this aspect of Purim, just as they have apologetically played down the entire subject of religiously motivated Jewish violence. Yet, he maintains, without facing up to these things honestly, it is impossible to understand many moments in medieval and modern Jewish history, starting with the alleged massacre by Jews of tens of thousands of Christians when a Persian army conquered Jerusalem from the Byzantines in 614 C.E. and down to Baruch Goldstein's murder of 29 Arabs in Hebron on February 25, 1994—a date, Horowitz points out, that not accidentally coincided that year with Purim.

WHAT IS THE historical evidence for Purim-linked anti-Christian violence? Given the fact that Horowitz had the better part of two millennia to choose from, one would expect him to have come up with a large body of it. Here, in chronological order, are some of the typical incidents he lists, including all that ended in death or serious injury, along with the Christian reaction to them:*

- Fifth century C.E.: Jews in Syria fasten a Christian boy to a gibbet representing Haman's gallows and whip him to death on Purim. (More commonly on Purim, Horowitz writes, Jews of this period burned effigies of the hung Haman, who also stood in their minds for the crucified Jesus; this can be inferred from an edict, issued by the emperor Theodosius II in 408, instructing all Roman governors to "prohibit the Jews from setting fire to [H]Aman in memory of his past punishment in a certain ceremony of their festival, and from burning with sacrilegious intent a form made to resemble the saint[ed] cross in contempt of the Christian faith.")
- 576 C.E.: A Jew in Clermont-Ferrand, France, throws "rancid oil" at "a former co-religionist who had

* Nearly all of these incidents are known exclusively from Christian chronicles and are uncorroborated by Jewish sources. Horowitz tends to accept the chronicles at face value and to accuse Jewish historians doubtful of their accuracy of an apologetic bias. Why he is so ready to assume that Christian chroniclers were not swayed by their own biases is a methodological question he does not pursue; for the sake of the argument, I shall not pursue it, either.

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been baptized early that day as [he] . . . entered the city with the other participants in the Easter procession." (Although this incident, like others mentioned in *Reckless Rites*, did not take place on Purim itself, Horowitz chooses to view the entire Purim-to-Passover period, corresponding to the Ash Wednesday-to-Easter period, as having been under the influence of Purim.)

- 1017: Several Jews in Rome "mock a crucifix" in their synagogue on Good Friday. (Reported to the authorities, they were beheaded.)
- 1192: With the backing of a friendly Christian countess, the Jews of Bray-sur-Seine, France, execute on Purim, on a gallows like Haman's, the Christian murderer of a Jew. (The countess notwithstanding, 80 or more Jews were put to death by the Christian authorities in return.)
- 1236: A Jew in Narbonne, France, kills a local Christian in a fight on Purim. (Widespread anti-Jewish riots broke out as a result.)
- 1389: A Jew in Prague "thr[ows] a stone at the monstrance carried by a priest" during Holy Week. (A number of local Jews were killed and burned in retaliation.)
- 1609: Jews in Rome respond to a Christian parody of a Jewish funeral performed during Carnival by "flinging a variety of household objects down upon the participants . . . causing a number of injuries."
- Ca. 1740: Jews in Alba, Italy, are reported by the local bishop to be doing on Purim what Jews "did elsewhere" as well—namely, smashing jars into pieces and expressing "the wish that Christendom too would quickly be smashed."

Add another two dozen incidents no more serious than the last three, and Horowitz's list is pretty much exhausted, leaving the reader to wonder just what all the hullabaloo is about. *This*, one asks, is the "legacy of Jewish violence" connected to Purim? Three reported Christian deaths at the hands of Jews in the course of history, one of which took place in a private quarrel? Would not a more reasonable conclusion from such evidence be that there is no such thing as a "legacy of Jewish violence" connected to Purim at all?

In his defense, perhaps, Elliott Horowitz might reply that the criticism is unfair. The point, he might say, is not what Jews actually did to Christians on Purim, since in Christian societies the Jewish freedom to do anything was highly restricted. (The vengeance wreaked on some of the "transgressive" Jewish acts mentioned by him demonstrates just how restricted it was.) Rather, it is what Jews would have liked to do if they could have done it, as illustrated by such Purim customs as burning effigies and smashing pots that symbolized Christianity and their Christian neighbors. The real subject of *Reckless Rites* is thus not actual Jewish violence but the potential for violence in Jewish emotions—a potential that, whenever the conditions for its actualization came into being, resulted in such frightful deeds as the 614 massacre or Baruch Goldstein's rampage.

Fair enough. But if violent emotions are what Elliott Horowitz is writing about, not only should he have said so in the first place, he is also knocking on an open door. Who would or could deny that Jews have felt violently toward their enemies and persecutors? The literature of Judaism, starting with the Bible, is fairly bursting with such feelings, the book of Esther being only one of innumerable examples. While it is certainly noteworthy if such feelings were expressed more openly on Purim than at other times, this tells us something about Purim, not about the feelings themselves. About them we would know all we needed to know even if Purim had never existed.

Reckless Rites thus suffers from a kind of scholarly astigmatism; the things it sees, though undoubtedly real, are seen in a distorted per-

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spective. What is historically interesting about Jewish feelings toward Christians, after all, is not that they were hostile; where has there ever been an oppressed people that did not feel hostility toward its oppressors? What is interesting is how Jews coped with these feelings—and in this they were *a*typical, not because they did not act violently toward Christians but because they did not act violently toward themselves.

Consider the case of African-Americans. This is a population traditionally associated with a high level of violence—yet until relatively recently, the violence was rarely inflicted on whites. On the contrary, throughout the entire period of slavery and post-emancipation racial segregation, physical attacks by blacks on whites were extremely rare. The obvious reason was the draconian retribution such attacks met with; in many parts of America, a black man could be lynched for far less. Instead, black violence was aimed at other blacks, and as such it was perfectly ordinary: brawling, wife-beating, child-beating, and other such acts are almost always more widespread in downtrodden minorities and pariah groups. The emotions that cannot be taken out on those one hates but also fears are taken out on those one does not hate and may even love.

Jews in Christian Europe were anomalous because they did not follow this pattern. Although some domestic violence undoubtedly existed among them, the indications are that it was not common; in the halakhic literature of medieval Europe, which tells us a great deal about everyday Jewish life, it is infrequently mentioned as a problem. Perfectly capable of verbal aggression, Jews nevertheless had strong inhibitions against physical aggression, inhibitions that cannot be explained merely by fear of Christian punishment. Indeed, medieval Christians would probably no more have cared about purely intra-Jewish violence than whites in Mississippi cared about intra-black violence.

HOW THESE inhibitions developed is a complex subject. But although Elliot Horowitz criticizes Jewish historians for turning a blind eye to the "legacy of Jewish violence" in Christian Europe, these historians have gotten it right. If there is any legacy at all, it is the legacy of Jewish *non*-violence—as both Jews and Christians were always quite aware, the Jews generally with pride in their higher moral standards, the Gentiles more often with disdain for the Jews' lack of physicality and manliness.

Why Horowitz, a competent historian and reader of texts, has so much trouble recognizing this is curious. In part, it may be due to nothing more than that perennial pitfall of scholarship, the desire to be original. Did Jews in Christian Europe have a reputation for being pacific? Well, then, let us demonstrate how wrong this is: Jews threw stones at Christians, mocked their religion to their faces, urinated on their crosses, burned them in effigy, even once or twice killed them—and often on, or close to, Purim. Clearly, the real Jew was the "Purim Jew," whom generations of historians, wed to their conventional conceptions, were unable to recognize.

But beyond this, I think, Horowitz is responding in *Reckless Rites* to what appears to him to be a genuine conundrum. Regarding violence, it would seem, Jewish history can be divided into three ages. First come the biblical period and classical antiquity, in which Jewish life is full of war and mayhem. Next come medieval and modern times, when all this seems to disappear, not only in Christian lands but in Muslim ones, too. And finally we have the state of Israel, and war and mayhem are back again.

Can we really be looking at three different types of Jews, between each of which and the next lies a historical discontinuity? Does not Occam's razor demand that we pare the three down to one—that we posit, that is, a single Jewish type with a strong predisposition to violence which, in the middle stage of Jewish history, lasting from the beginning of exilic times through the Holocaust, went underground? And is it not the historian's task, then, to unearth this underground vein and bring it to light?

The problem with such an analysis is that it removes the Jews from their human context. Implicit in it is Horowitz's assumption that, historically, Jewish violence has been special, so that, in explaining it, whether in regard to 7th-century Jerusalem or 20th-century Hebron, we must invoke unique causes like the intolerance of Jewish monotheism, Jewish hatred for Gentiles, and the biblical and rabbinic concept of "Amalek."* This is an assumption with a long tradition of anti-Semitic historical writing behind it, and it is ironic that Horowitz, in his eagerness to upset the applecart of conventional wisdom, has resorted to another set of intellectual conventions about the Jews that is at least as old as the French *philosophes*.

It is also a superficial way of thinking. What *it* turns a blind eye to is that war and violence have been endemic to all human societies, and that Jewish violence forms the most minuscule chapter in a universal story. Against such a background, all attempts to explain specific outbreaks of violence in human history as fundamentally motivated by religious animus seem sadly inadequate.

OCCAM'S RAZOR is a useful tool, but Horowitz does not wield it sharply enough. His formulation needs to be pared down further. It is not only Jews who have been predisposed

* Amalek was the name of a desert people who attacked the Israelites on their way out of Egypt and whom the Bible commands to "destroy utterly." As a label, it is applied by the book of Esther to Haman (described as a descendant of Amalek) and later—as Horowitz shows in a lengthy discussion—to Christians by some medieval Jews.

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throughout their history to violence, which has surfaced openly among them under certain conditions and been repressed under others. It is all humanity. What is unusual about Jews is that, for much of their history, the resort to violence *was* repressed.

Indeed, it is precisely this trait of the Jews that modern Zionism, rightly convinced that a people that would not fight for its independence would never get it, successfully sought to reverse. There is to this day a great deal of Jewish ambivalence toward this reversal, and Elliot Horowitz strikes one as a typical case of it—a Jew who is disturbed to find that there were Jews in medieval Europe who risked their lives by doing crazily provocative things of the kind that he himself would never do, yet who is also secretly pleased by the knowledge that such "proto-Zionist" Jews existed and had the courage to be as defiant as they were. In the end, Horowitz emerges from *Reckless Rites* as a bit of a closet Purim Jew himself.

Balancing Act

Überpower:
The Imperial Temptation of America

by Josef Joffe

W.W. Norton. 256 pp. $24.95

Reviewed by
Bret Stephens

Josef Joffe occupies a rare perch among Europe's public intellectuals. As the publisher and editor of *Die Zeit*, Germany's mass-circulation, highbrow weekly newspaper, he is a fixture of the country's Left-tilting cultural establishment. Yet this Jewish son of Berlin—educated at Swarthmore, Johns Hopkins, and Harvard—is a defender of Israel and the United States, as well as one of the keener dissectors of the European conceits and anti-American pathologies so common to his peers. Those virtues go some way toward redeeming *Überpower*, an occasionally brilliant if ultimately unpersuasive attempt to sketch America's "grand strategy" for the 21st century.

The point of that strategy, Joffe understands, is not how the U.S. should manage its "inevitable decline," a theme frequently sounded in books of this genre. The point is how to stay on top. Joffe approaches this question as a foreign-policy "realist," a thinker more in the mold of balance-of-power calculators like Henry Kissinger or Brent Scowcroft than of democratic idealists like Woodrow Wilson or George W. Bush. As a result, he devotes much of *Überpower* to tallying up the "objective" political, economic, military, and cultural strengths of the U.S. vis-à-vis its current and prospective competitors.

This approach is not without its benefits, not least because Joffe, cutting against the grain of much conventional wisdom, underscores just how weak America's competitors are. Beijing? Even if China's gross domestic product were to keep doubling every decade—historically an unprecedented feat—Joffe calculates that it would only reach parity with *current* U.S. GDP in 30 years. Moscow? Russia's population shrinks every year by 0.5 percent, hardly a sign of national vitality.

What about Brussels? The European Union's aggregate GDP nearly matches America's, and its population exceeds ours by about 50 percent. But look closer: Europeans, Joffe observes, "live by the obverse of John F. Kennedy's fabled injunction, which now reads, 'Ask not what you can do for your country, but what your country can do for you.'" The EU commands minimal public loyalty—witness last year's rejection by the French and the Dutch of the European Constitution. Europe's growth rates consistently lag behind America's, partly for tax and regulatory reasons, partly because the average European works 300 fewer hours a year than the average American. And then there is the fatal convergence of demography and the welfare state: Europe's ratio of workers to retirees, currently an economically cumbersome three-to-one, is projected to become a socially catastrophic one-to-one by mid-century.

But while American primacy is a fact, Joffe suggests it is also a mixed blessing. The world reaps the benefits of the U.S. trade deficit, the monetary anchor of the dollar, and "Security Made in the USA." Yet America's "singular strength" may tempt it into foreign adventures potentially beyond its reach—fixing the Arab world's dysfunctional political culture via regime change being the one that Joffe plainly has in mind. In the tradition of foreign-policy realists, he predicts that America's "unbalanced power" will thus inevitably provoke attempts at counterbalancing.

Indeed, it already has. In Joffe's reading, the effort by France, Germany, and Russia to frustrate and discredit the Iraq war is only the most obvious instance of what threatens to become a longstanding pattern. Nor are "coalitions of the unwilling" the only means by which the rest of the world seeks to contain American power. For Joffe, the Kyoto Protocol, the Landmine Convention, the International Criminal Court, and similar legal schemes have nothing to do with "good global citizenship." Their real purpose is to bend "Mr. Big" to the will of the many. The same goes for anti-Americanism, which Joffe sees as a form of "cultural balancing." At the far end of the spectrum there is terrorism, the most cost-effective

Bret Stephens, *a member of the editorial board of the* Wall Street Journal, *writes the "Global View" column that appears in the* Journal *each Tuesday.*

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way yet devised to wound the U.S. and restrain its power.

HOW SHALL the U.S. respond? One of the strengths of Joffe's analysis is his awareness that much of the resentment the U.S. generates is neither within its power nor even in its interest to control. American ideals, methods, tastes, and products are attractive and pervasive; the hatred they generate is a byproduct of their success. Thus the notion, popularized by the Harvard political scientist Joseph Nye, that the U.S. can ingratiate itself with a wary world by substituting the cultural tools of "soft power" for the military and economic tools of "hard power" is a fantasy. In today's world, imitation is not always a form of flattery. Joffe wryly recalls

> a march on Frankfurt's *Amerikahaus* during the heyday of the German student movement. The enraged protester students wore jeans and American army apparel. They even played a distorted Jimmy Hendrix version of the American national anthem. But they threw rocks against the U.S. cultural center nonetheless. Though they wore and listened American, they targeted precisely the embodiment of America's cultural presence in Europe.

Still, Joffe believes there is a difference between this kind of vulgar anti-Americanism and the sort that leads a Vladimir Putin to supply Iran with advanced anti-aircraft missiles, the main purpose of which would be to defend Iranian nuclear sites against an American air strike. How to keep the former from tipping over into the latter?

Joffe's answer is for the U.S. to apply two very different strategies as occasion and necessity dictate—or, as he puts it in terms alluding to 19th-century precedents, to "balance à la Britain" and "bond à la Bismark." The former requires "making sure ambitions fail." The latter means sustaining "stronger ties with [America's] allies and rivals than they might weave among themselves." But America's leaders, adds Joffe, will have to be better balancers than Lord Palmerston and better bonders than Germany's Iron Chancellor, always recognizing against whom to balance and how best to bond. "By resisting the lure of its unprecedented power," Joffe concludes, "the United States will husband its strength instead of squandering it on imperial ventures that provoke resentment and resistance."

UP TO A POINT, there is not much to gainsay in this recipe for a second American century. The U.S. is and will remain the giant of the international system, and it ought to be,

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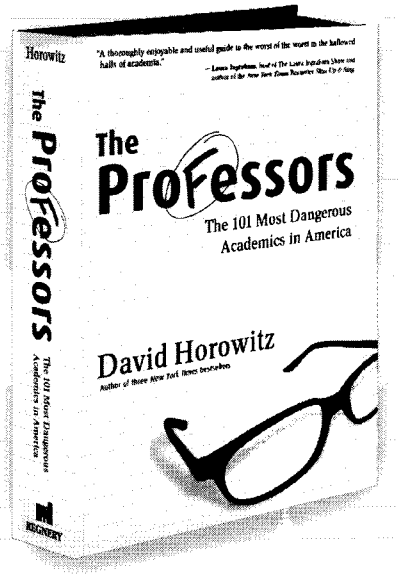

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as Joffe urges, a benign giant. Besides, as he acknowledges, the U.S. *already* balances and bonds. In the Middle East, Washington tacitly supported Iraq against Iran in the 1980's but turned on Saddam Hussein after his 1990 invasion of Kuwait. At the same time, America bonds with former or current rivals like Egypt and Israel, or Taiwan and China, thereby managing potential conflicts between them.

So far, so good. Yet as a practical guide to 21st-century American statesmanship, Joffe's concerns also seem curiously beside the point. Yes, the U.S. will have to continue operating within the state system and the various global institutions that, for better or worse, help to define it. Relations with China, Russia, Mexico, etc. will have to be managed wisely. The U.S. will need to set a good global example on trade, farm subsidies, and the like. And to the extent we can employ creative public diplomacy to help tamp anti-Americanism, so much the better.

But the preeminent risk the U.S. runs is not low public-approval ratings abroad but an act of nuclear terrorism, perpetrated by Islamic fanatics colluding with rogue regimes. On this all-important subject, Joffe is nearly silent, devoting to it but two pages of sustained attention in a 240-page book. The attacks of September 11 are discussed *en passant*. Although they may have pierced America's "protective bubble," Joffe writes, they did not alter the fact that the U.S. "cannot be defeated in any meaningful way." Nor does he have much to say, except tangentially, about current predicaments in the Middle East, nuclear proliferation, the ideological challenge of radical Islam, the wisdom of the Bush administration's democratization strategy, or the means by which it might be carried out.

Surely such omissions cannot be inadvertent. Perhaps Joffe thinks these are properly subjects for another day, although it is hard to see how a book on "grand strategy" could fail to explain to readers why the great obsessions of our era are not such significant concerns after all. A likelier reason is that realism, with its relative indifference to ideology and its emphasis on states as the decisive actors in global affairs, has trouble accommodating such obsessions. And so they are discounted or ignored.

There is in this a symptom of a larger problem, typical of Europe's general inability to understand that America is not only the world's greatest power but also the most vulnerable. Joffe's confidence in the strength of America's defenses notwithstanding, the explosion of a 10-kiloton nuclear bomb on the Washington Mall or in downtown Manhattan would, in fact, "defeat" the U.S., even if it did not quite annihilate America. A nuclear-armed Iran capable of driving the Fifth Fleet out of the Persian Gulf or fomenting a ruinous Shiite insurgency in Iraq would similarly be a "meaningful" defeat. Such threats may as yet be imaginary, but September 11 was an object lesson in the power of imagination.

The great challenge for the U.S. in this century is to impose a new kind of symmetry vis-à-vis the "asymmetrical" terrorist threat, by devising its own asymmetrical responses. Preventive war is one such asymmetry, as is democratization, as are warrantless wiretaps, as is the "enemy combatant" status assigned to the prisoners at Guantanamo Bay. The question is whether the U.S. will be able to manage such responses effectively, and in the teeth of public and international skepticism. Concerning this central issue, it would have been good to have some guidance from so acute an observer as Josef Joffe. As it is, his analysis is not so much wrong as irrelevant.

Substance Abuse

Politics Lost: How American Democracy Was Trivialized By People Who Think You're Stupid

by Joe Klein

Doubleday. 256 pp. $23.95

Reviewed by
Dan Seligman

Joe Klein has been a high-visibility presence on the politico-media landscape for more than a quarter-century, but I have always had trouble getting him in focus. The blurriness probably owes something to the fact that as a political analyst he has appeared on a dizzying succession of platforms over the years: *Rolling Stone*, *New York*, the *New Yorker*, *Newsweek*, and (currently) *Time*, where he writes a weekly column. He can also be found chirping away on the television talk shows while also producing the occasional big book—the biggest by far being *Primary Colors* (1996), a political *roman à clef* obviously based on the Clinton presidency and signed "Anonymous." The credit line changed when handwriting and other forensic experts demonstrated that the author had to be Klein, a dénouement that providentially gave the book another big burst of buzz just as the paperback version was being rolled out.

But my failure to have a coherent fix on Klein undoubtedly has deeper roots. I learn from passing remarks in *Politics Lost* that he began his professional life wedded to Left-liberal politics, souring on them at some point without, however, turning conservative. In other asides, he mysteriously identifies himself with our country's "radical middle," whatever that is. He seems mostly to have positioned himself over the years as supremely non-ideological,

Dan Seligman *is a contributing editor of* Forbes.

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someone not particularly interested in evaluating the ideas served up by politicians but rather a handicapper whose main job is to tell us which horse is the best bet to win the political derby, and why.

It is therefore somewhat surprising to find that Klein's new book is a lament for the decline of "substance" in American politics. The substantive issues, he tells us, are now enormous:

> Big decisions are afoot—the economic changes wrought by globalization, the demographic changes made possible by miraculous medical developments, the probability of a long-term, slow-burning war against Islamist extremism—and big decisions have to be made about the nation's future.

But, on Klein's analysis, the political process is no longer capable of dealing seriously with issues of this magnitude. The process, he says, has been taken over and "trivialized" by a new breed of political professionals—campaign consultants, pollsters, media counselors, peddlers of focus groups, speech doctors, "image" shapers, and advertising men who have made themselves indispensable to all big-league politicians even as they have rendered it harder for office-seekers to address the issues themselves.

Klein is personally acquainted with many of the consultants in question, and appears to like and admire some of them, even while viewing their profession as an evil that is dragging down American democracy. In the book's early pages, he serves up two stories of the olden days—the time before politicians were coached by professionals, and could still come across as authentic human beings.

The first, which opens the book's prologue, is about a speech given by Bobby Kennedy in Indianapolis on April 4, 1968, the day Martin Luther King, Jr. was assassinated. Kennedy's audience was a black crowd that had not yet heard the news of King's death. In the space of a few minutes, and speaking extemporaneously, Bobby is said to have attained extraordinary heights of eloquence, delivering the bad news while also appealing for peace, love, and justice, recalling his own brother's assassination, and along the way, somehow managing to quote Aeschylus: "Even in our sleep, pain which cannot forget, falls drop by drop upon the human heart."

Klein, who was not himself present—he appears to be quoting from a tape of the speech—tells us

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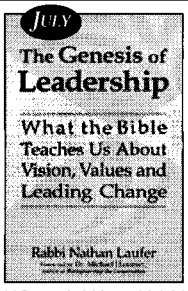

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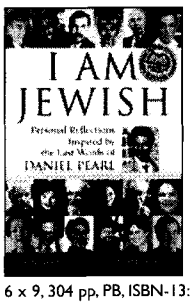

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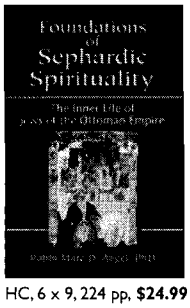

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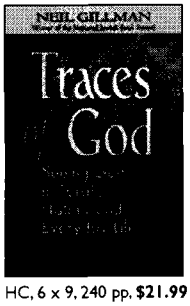

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that Bobby's bravura performance represented the end of an era:

> the last moments before American political life was overwhelmed by marketing professionals, consultants, and pollsters who, with the flaccid acquiescence of the politicians, have robbed public life of much of its romance and vigor.

Klein's second story is about President Harry Truman's acceptance speech at the 1948 Democratic nominating convention. This too was delivered without a script, and at the climactic moment Truman threw in an odd detail: "On the 26th of July, which out in Missouri we call Turnip Day, I am going to call Congress back and ask them to pass laws to halt rising prices, to meet the housing crisis . . . ." Klein is fascinated not by the list of what Truman was planning to demand from Congress but the reference to Turnip Day, which he sees as symbolizing the candidate's success in presenting himself as a genuine man of the people:

> The mention of Turnip Day was a throwaway, a tiny gesture, perhaps an unwitting one, a small seed of humanity planted in the public mind— but the seed blossomed into the "Give 'em hell, Harry" persona that won one of the greatest upsets in presidential history that November.

Klein has rather elaborate views about the importance of Turnip Day moments in politics, i.e., moments in which a candidate says something revealing, often offering clues to his own character. *Politics Lost* is replete with examples.

One is Ronald Reagan's outburst of wrath when, during a 1980 debate in New Hampshire, the moderator tried to shut off his microphone. Reagan's "I paid for this microphone!" is said to have guaranteed his win in the New Hampshire primary. Klein also offers examples of "negative Turnip Day moments" (thought to hurt the candidate), including John Kerry's gratuitous reference, in one of the presidential debates, to the fact that Vice President Cheney has a lesbian daughter.

Having laid this foundation, Klein develops his case against consultants in eight chapters taking us through the presidential campaigns of the past 30 years. He begins with the extraordinary career of Pat Caddell, a youthful pollster turned consultant who gained Jimmy Carter's confidence in 1976, and at age twenty-five could plausibly tell himself that he had elected a President. It was an article of faith with Caddell that voters do not care much about the big policy issues, and he no doubt felt vindicated by post-election polling indicating that Carter's views remained unknown to about half of all voters. A month after the election, Caddell hit Carter with a 10,000-word memorandum on political strategies for incumbents. Its main point was that "governing with public approval requires a continuing political campaign," with endless polling required to determine what was working and what was not.

Caddell also had a lot to say about Carter's style. He wanted the President to emphasize humility and informality, and offered numerous detailed suggestions (fireside chats, cardigan sweaters) that were duly adopted by the leader of the free world. The advice turned out to be disastrous. The American people did not want a humble President, Klein tells us, they wanted a leader. Partly because of his flawed performance, partly because of his own personality problems (he appears to have had a raging, uncontrollable temper), Caddell would gradually lose out in the competition for work advising the most promising candidates.

As Klein guides us through other presidential elections, we see more consultants falling on their faces. In the 1980 election, the Reagan Republicans began the campaign with John Sears as their lead professional, but Sears worked too hard at "managing" Reagan's public performances, leading to a chorus of complaints ("Let Reagan be Reagan") from the candidate's fans, and ultimately from the candidate himself. Sears was fired soon after the New Hampshire primary.

In the Clinton era, Dick Morris, a consultant who had helped the President win gubernatorial elections in Arkansas, took polling to new heights, commissioning, among other things, a survey with 259 questions to help prepare one of Clinton's State of the Union addresses. It appears that at one point, Morris's polling data induced the Clintons to take a "cowboy vacation" in Wyoming rather than relaxing at Martha's Vineyard. Identified by Klein as "the ultimate iteration of the consultant as snake-oil salesman," Morris rode high until a supermarket tabloid photographed him with a prostitute during the 1996 campaign. He was quickly jettisoned.

A consultant who has apparently never been fired and who still commands considerable respect among Democratic politicians is Bob Shrum, who began as a speechwriter for George McGovern in the 1972 race and went on to advise a string of other presidential candidates: John V. Lindsay, Richard Gephardt, Ted Kennedy, Jimmy Carter (but only in 1980), Bob Kerrey, Al Gore, and John Kerry. Shrum is a committed liberal, and candidates who buy his services tend to talk a great deal about sticking up for the working man, the need for universal health care, and the awfulness of tax cuts for the rich. This may help explain his .000 batting average.

For reasons left unexplained, Shrum gets far more respectful treatment from Klein than does almost any other consultant. The mystery might be significant, because the career of this particular political pro undermines one of the book's main premises—namely, that consultants

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are somehow preventing candidates from expressing their ideas. The Shrum saga suggests a different perspective: candidates choose consultants whose ideas are compatible with their own, and the role of the consultant is not to tell candidates what to say but the more modest one of helping to get those ideas across.

Possibly because he himself is not much interested in the substantive ideas that drive political debates in the U.S., Klein nowhere makes a coherent case for the alleged decline of substance and seriousness in politics. The case he does make has more to do with what might be called the decline of "authenticity" in politics, i.e., the increasing difficulty of coming to know the real candidate when his persona is being shaped by image merchants.

But the distinction between real and unreal candidates proves elusive. Are we really to believe that Bobby Kennedy's rhetoric on that fateful day in Indianapolis stamps him as genuine? Are we to take seriously Klein's statement that in quoting Aeschylus to the destitute and uneducated, he was evidencing "deep respect for his audience, which is not present in modern American politics"? I would bet my bottom dollar that Bobby had quoted the same passage many times before, and that it just tumbled out of his mouth again, in that unscripted moment.

Most books describing some large social problem have a concluding chapter telling us how the problem might be solved. But Klein never gets around to imagining a political universe in which consultants do not play a large role. It would in fact be very hard to describe any such universe. Politicians have always trimmed their views to bring them more in line with the electorate they are appealing to, and consultants really do offer some useful expertise in the gauging of voters' views.

Indeed, Harry Truman, presented by Klein as the ultimate in authenticity, almost certainly won in 1948 because he had bought into a strategic analysis prepared by the consultants James Rowe and Clark Clifford. These hired hands argued persuasively that the President's only hope of reelection was an unabashedly populist campaign appealing to the economic interests of union members, Northern blacks, farmers, and middle-class liberals. It was plainly this document, and not a throwaway line in Truman's acceptance speech, that created the victorious "Give 'em hell, Harry."

The crucial role of the Rowe-Clifford memorandum is well established, and one has to believe that Joe Klein knows about it. That he would nevertheless ignore it, preferring instead to lean on Turnip Day whimsy, may tell us something about his own authenticity.

Planners & Seekers

The White Man's Burden: Why the West's Efforts to Aid the Rest Have Done So Much Ill and So Little Good

by William Easterly

Penguin Press. 436 pp. $27.95

Reviewed by
Joshua Kurlantzick

THE ECONOMIST Jeffrey Sachs was once known primarily as the doctor who healed the economies of post-cold-war Eastern Europe, but recently he has achieved far greater fame. With the publication last year of *The End of Poverty: Economic Possibilities for Our Time*,* he almost single-handedly revived a seemingly lost cause. If, Sachs argued, rich countries increased their foreign aid to roughly $150 billion a year, the world could eliminate extreme poverty by 2025.

Support for Sachs's "end poverty" push now ranges from the musician Bono, who was named one of *Time*'s Men of the Year (along with Bill and Melinda Gates) for urging rich governments to ante up; to the United Nations, which has set eight Millennium Development Goals for 2015; to Tony Blair, who echoed Sachs in calling for a doubling of aid to Africa. Sachs even helped inspire the music promoter Bob Geldof to hold a globe-spanning rock festival for the cause in July 2005—ten simultaneous shows, collectively titled Live 8 and designed to pressure global leaders to banish poverty.

Who could object to such idealism? William Easterly, for one. A former senior research economist at the World Bank, Easterly has spent his career working for international institutions that try to help the poor. His first book, *The Elusive Quest for Growth: Economists' Adventures and Misadventures in the Tropics* (2001), established him as perhaps the foremost critic of foreign economic intervention in the third world. In *The White Man's Burden*, he extends his argument, placing Sachs and his followers squarely in his sights.

AS EASTERLY sees it, the great problem with foreign aid has always been the utopian aims of "Planners"—humanitarians who think they know the answer to problems in advance and insist on imposing their own solutions. During the 19th and early 20th centuries, when Western countries were still colonial powers, leaders like the British abolitionist William Wilberforce and President Woodrow Wilson considered themselves chosen to save the non-white "Rest." As Wilberforce demanded in the name of Christianity and Enlightenment alike,

JOSHUA KURLANTZICK *is a special correspondent for the* New Republic *and a visiting scholar at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace.*

* Reviewed by David Frum in the June 2005 COMMENTARY.

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"Must we not then . . . endeavor to raise these wretched beings?" What he and those like him failed to ask, according to Easterly, was whether their remedies actually helped their impoverished wards.

After World War II, the West's rhetoric of racial superiority died out, but the frame of mind behind it did not. In the 1950's and 60's, private and government organizations inspired by Walt Rostow's *The Stages of Economic Growth* decided that poor nations needed big doses of aid, often focused on infrastructure, to escape from the "poverty trap"—the supposed need to spend all of their resources on survival, leaving little for investment in the long-term welfare of their societies.

As Easterly shows, however, the Planners' big push failed. Advocates like Robert McNamara, the president of the World Bank, focused only on the volume of foreign aid, constantly proposing to double disbursements. But the aid had no discernible effect on growth rates and brought only modest improvements in the quality of life. Tanzania, for instance, received $2 billion worth of gleaming new roads, only to see them deteriorate from lack of maintenance.

In the 1980's and 90's, Western givers began to emphasize something called structural-adjustment programs—that is, loans conditioned on market reforms in the recipient countries. But these, too, failed. In the Ivory Coast, which received more than twenty loan packages, per-capita income plunged, leading to "one of the worst and longest depressions in economic history." In other recent cases—in countries like Bolivia and Malawi—the policies dictated by structural-adjustment loans from the International Monetary Fund and World Bank have contributed to a collapse into economic and political turmoil.

Thanks in part to this record, aid to the third world fell out of favor in the late 1990's. Today, through the efforts of Sachs and his fellow

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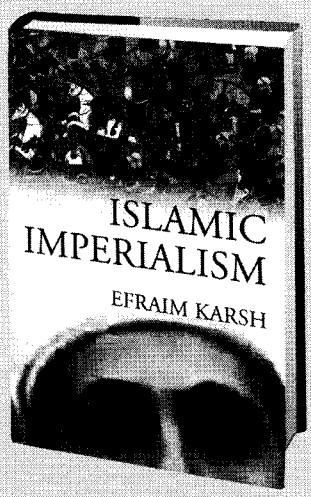

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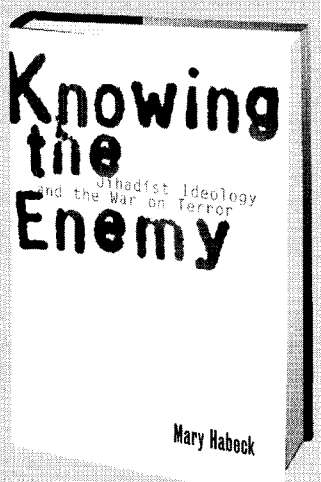

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travelers, it has come full circle. But Easterly sees little difference between today's top-down anti-poverty agenda and the one promoted with such fanfare in the 1950's—or in the 1850's. The utopian impulse has remained a constant. As he quotes Sachs: "To do things piecemeal is vacuous. . . . Success in ending the poverty trap will be much easier than it appears."

THE CORE problem, Easterly contends, is that few Western aid programs ever seek feedback from their consumers, the world's poor. Aid bureaucrats seldom feel accountable to anyone other than their rich-country principals, who rate results not on how money is used but on how much of it is given out. In Angola, for example, the World Bank disbursed some $180 million to the government between 1992 and 1999, despite rampant corruption. When that sparked little growth, donors just upped the ante. Nor do many donors attempt even a basic cost-benefit analysis of aid flows. If they did, Easterly believes, they might realize that the battle against HIV/AIDS in Africa has taken more lives than it has saved, because the money spent on expensive anti-retroviral treatments diverts funding from HIV prevention and the fight against other diseases, like malaria.

On the basis of this analysis, Easterly's advice to Western donors is that they should stop thinking of themselves as Planners and begin thinking of themselves instead as "Searchers." They should investigate what is in demand in impoverished countries, adapt to local conditions, and stress accountability. Indeed, he shows, such programs have already achieved some measure of success. In Bangladesh, for instance, a doctor found that if he charged his poor clients small fees for basic care, they became more active and demanding as patients than those receiving it for free. Another initiative, called GlobalGiving.com, lets potential recipients post their ideas online to win over donors who are "shopping" for worthy projects. Even the World Bank has gotten into the act, with a program begun in the early 1990's that gives parents small in-kind rewards for their children's school attendance; enrollment has doubled.

Though Easterly celebrates such efforts, and believes that market instincts are hardwired into all human beings, he does not tout laissez-faire capitalism as a panacea. As he sees it, development agencies simply should abandon the patronizing conviction that they alone can transform the third world. They should allow the poor in Africa and other underdeveloped regions to "be their own Searchers." At most, the West should provide support for small-scale programs with built-in feedback—just the sort of modest interventions disdained by Jeffrey Sachs and his minions.

WILLIAM EASTERLY'S writing is much like that of Thomas Friedman. To explain complex economic questions, he mixes anecdotal reporting with simple descriptions of ideas and theories. To Easterly's credit, though, he does not fall into the Friedman trap of extrapolating trends from a handful of examples; he backs up his claims with significant research.

As an attack on the international anti-poverty establishment, *The White Man's Burden* is difficult to refute. Easterly hits easy targets, like the hydra of United Nations organizations, with their useless "summits" and onerous reporting requirements. But he also debunks the more hardheaded advocates of aid. As against Sachs, Easterly throws cold water on the idea of a "poverty trap," finding economic mobility among even the poorest states. As for the premise of the Bush administration's Millennium Challenge Corporation—the idea that aid can be used as an incentive to promote good government—he sees little evidence that donors themselves can make such discriminations, and even offers reason to doubt that democracy makes aid more effective.

Where Easterly fares less well is in his own agenda for improving foreign aid. He is right, no doubt, that assistance must encompass more feedback, accountability, and market-driven solutions. But he cannot see beyond the possibility of piecemeal change, even though at times he appears to understand the contribution it can make to broader developments. Thus, he notes the significance of market reforms in Xiaogang, China during the 1970's, calling them the "pebble that started the landslide of the Chinese economic miracle," but he fails to describe how the one might have contributed to the other.

Indeed, there is an unwarranted resignation in Easterly's advice, especially considering the economic transformation that has swept much of the globe in recent decades. Most of the high-growth Asian economies he cites as success stories actually combined elements of (in his terms) both Searching and Planning. Each country found an economic model suited to it—Hong Kong became a trading entrepot, South Korea, an industrial giant—and formulated national policies accordingly. Today, some private-sector aid donors, like the Gates Foundation, blend elements of Searching and Planning as well, trying to look at problems like malaria control comprehensively while figuring out what works best in particular environments.

If *The White Man's Burden* is too dour in these respects, it does serve as a useful warning to the next generation of utopians. After all, two decades before the Live 8 concerts inspired by Jeffrey Sachs's crusade, rockers held another benefit, Live Aid, to boost assistance to Ethiopia. They raised some $100 million for the cause; today, Ethiopia is even poorer than it was then.

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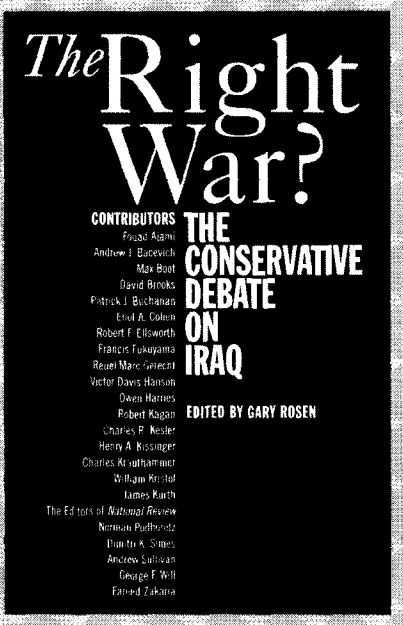

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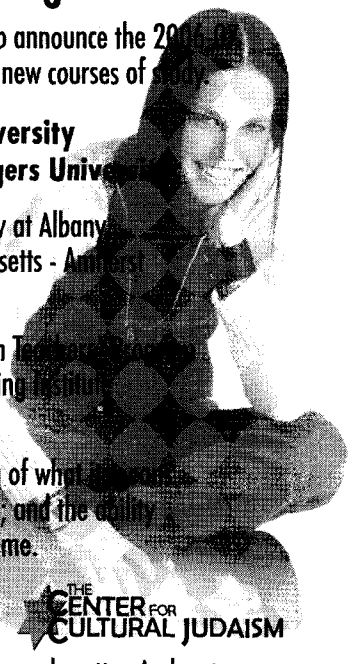

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Among the Cicadas

The Force of Reason
by Oriana Fallaci
Rizzoli. 290 pp. $19.95

Reviewed by
David Pryce-Jones

ORIANA FALLACI is due to appear soon in an Italian court to answer a charge that her latest book vilifies Islam. Similar charges against her in France and Switzerland have come to nothing in the past, and the case in Italy may similarly fall by the way. Yet there is no getting around the disturbing sense that today's Europe, which boasts of universal civil rights enshrined in law, is in practice willing to abridge the freedom of speech that is at the core of democracy. The European Union has gone so far as to pass a law against blasphemy, a regression to pre-Enlightenment custom if ever there was one. Voltaire, thou shouldst be living at this hour.

The challenge to Europe's view of itself, and therefore to the values it lives by, comes from Muslim immigration. For the past three or four decades, Europeans have encouraged such immigration on economic and demographic grounds. At no point did anyone in authority pause to ask if this permissiveness was wise, or what would happen if the Muslim minority were to grow sizably in numbers and, for reasons of religious faith and differing values, fail or decline to integrate into European society. Instead, each country adopted a variant of multiculturalism, a generic term for the official hope that people, whoever they may be, have only to do their own thing and all will be well.

This policy has proved a victim of the political Islam promoted by Iran and Saudi Arabia. These two Muslim states sponsor imams all over Europe who preach that Muslims have religious endorsement to live in the West so long as they do not integrate. Above all, they owe it to themselves to have no other identity than Islam, and in its name are free to make whatever claims they like on their host societies. Many, indeed most, Muslims are wary of this militant and alienating worldview, but enough subscribe to it to precipitate a genuine cultural war, a *Kulturkampf*.

Unequipped to fight cultural wars, and eager to salvage multiculturalism, governments everywhere in Europe have undertaken every possible concession to Muslims. The rationale is this: to forbid customs and practices that are illegal in the West (including female circumcision and infibulation), or to interfere with such things as Muslim marriage laws safeguarding the husband's sovereign rights, will risk creating even more recruits for political Islam.

This has been going on for quite some time by now. The cowardly response to the Iranian *fatwa* against Salman Rushdie for his novel *The Satanic Verses* (1987) was an early indication that, where Muslim sensibilities were concerned, European governments were not prepared to pay much of a price for the defense of free speech. Similarly, both secular and Christian authorities responded to the recent Muslim outcry against a few Danish cartoons with apologies and a call for self-censorship. Last fall, youths rioting and burning cars in over 300 French towns and cities to cries of "*Allahu akhbar*" were described euphemistically as delinquents, vandals, social outcasts: anything but the Muslims they were.

Fear of Islamic violence induces appeasement, and the case of Oriana Fallaci is only another example.

BORN IN 1930 in Florence, Oriana Fallaci is old enough to have had first-hand experience of fascism under Mussolini. Her father, she has recorded, was active in the resistance, and at one point was held by fascist militiamen and tortured. As a young girl, she carried messages past wartime checkpoints.

Post-Fascist generations, however, have known nothing but the welfare state and its founding myth of peace, love, and brotherhood. At the outset of her career, Fallaci seems indeed to have subscribed to these simplicities, which captivated so many of her contemporaries. For her first book, *The Egotists* (1963), she interviewed figures of celebrity in that swinging period—playboys and playgirls, film stars and directors, even a bull-fighter—writing about them in a tone of surface disapproval that really signified admiration and perhaps even envy.

As the cold war persisted, casting a shadow over the early prospects of brotherhood, European intellectuals hurried to Vietnam in order to rejoice in America's agony and the Communist victory. Fallaci covered Vietnam from a conventional left-wing slant. But thereafter she seems to have entertained second thoughts. Reverting to her specialty of interviewing personalities in the public eye, she became one of the first to appreciate that Yasir Arafat was an outstanding liar; that as compared with the shah of Iran (whom she depicted as a rather pathetic figure), Ayatollah Khomeini was a dangerous fanatic; and that Muammar Qaddafi was a sinister clown. Gaining access to men of power and reporting on them without being impressed, Fallaci seemed another Martha Gellhorn or Lillian Ross—and became more famous.

SEPTEMBER 11, 2001 was a defining moment. Out of a clear sky, political Islam initiated war on a massive scale. Nevertheless, European intellectuals by and large took the view that here was a movement that might indeed challenge the worldwide hegemony of the despised

DAVID PRYCE-JONES's *new book*, Betrayal: France, the Arabs, and the Jews *(based on his May 2005 article in* COMMENTARY*), is coming out in the fall from Encounter Books.*

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United States, replacing the Soviet Union whose decline and fall had so confounded them. To this day, government officials and intellectuals in France, Germany, Scandinavia, and elsewhere do not conceal their belief—their hope—that the American campaign against political Islam will end in a well deserved, Vietnam-style agony.

Ordinary Europeans, by contrast, may question American tactics, but, again by and large, do not share the glee or the expectations of those claiming to speak for them. By now, they have had enough experience of their own cultural war to suspect—fairly or unfairly—that the twenty million or so Muslim immigrants now in their midst stand in the same relation to political Islam as Communist-party members once did to the Soviet Union.

In 2002, with a polemic entitled *The Rage and the Pride*, Oriana Fallaci raced into this gap between what ordinary people are supposed to think about Muslims and what they actually do think. That book, random and idiosyncratic as a stream-of-consciousness novel, was written in a heterodox style perhaps more suited to Italian than to English. There was a central perception, however.

Fallaci's first-hand knowledge of Muslim leaders and Muslim society had led her to conclude that political Islam was no momentary criminal wave, let alone the aberration of a few psychopaths. Rather, it was a force capable of appealing widely to the Muslim masses, expressing as it did the historic belief in the rightful supremacy of Islam over all the other peoples and faiths that have regularly frustrated that supremacy. In this scheme of things, she wrote, the idea of Muslim integration into Western society was by definition excluded. Therefore, the choice facing Westerners was to fight political Islam until it was defeated, or to surrender.

The Rage and the Pride sold millions of copies in a number of languages.

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But Fallaci herself became, and remains, a polarizing figure. To some, she is courageously leading the defense of the West. To others, she is a hysteric, guilty of Islamophobia and of sacrilege against the canonical European value of multiculturalist tolerance, and she must be stopped.

Her latest book, *The Force of Reason*, another rush of consciousness, is aimed at the latter group, from whose ranks have issued the lawsuits against her and, even, threats on her life. Such threats, she assures us, do not trouble her; in any case, she suffers from terminal cancer. What is insupportable is that so many commentators, journalists, and intellectuals, who ought to know better, have in effect committed treason, taking the side of the enemy in the great cultural war.

In *The Force of Reason*, peculiarly translated into English by Fallaci herself, she lambastes these critics with a will. Leftwing journalists who accuse her of bias and racism are, she writes, "cicadas"—invisible insects, humming in unison. She revels in contempt for all the "multimillionaire third-worlder Hollywood stars, the bastards dressed up as university professors, the wretches who support pro-Islamic obscenities of [the] pro-Islamic UN." She singles out a few for special derision. One of them (Doudou Diène by name) wants to ban criticism of any aspect of Islam; another (Sigrid Hunke) neatly wove anti-Semitism into her two life roles as a former Nazi intellectual and latterly an apologist for Islam.

Fallaci's brushstrokes are very broad, not only when it comes to her critics but when it comes to Muslims. These she lumps together indiscriminately. The only art in which Muslims have excelled, she charges, is "the art of invading and conquering and subjugating." The difference today is that now they have "a design based on gradual penetration rather than brutal and sudden aggression."

This weakens her argument. Muslim immigrants cannot be blamed for having responded to an open invitation to settle in Europe. Caught between the incompatible demands of political Islam and Western society, these millions find themselves in an invidious position. Where Fallaci is on much stronger ground is in blaming the multiculturalist Left for helping to trap Muslim immigrants in this bind, and in broadening her critique to note how the Left has been aided by Europe's Christians, including the Catholic Church. The Church, she writes acidly, again giving chapter and verse, "seems to be incapable of defending Christianity," and thereby to have become another collaborator in the ongoing Islamization of Europe.

EUROPE'S HORDES of cicadas, university professors, religious spokesmen, and government officials may succeed in writing off all of this as another shrill and even racist tirade. But in Europe, sales of *The Force of Reason* are high. The huge majority of Europeans think as Oriana Fallaci does, however inhibited they may be by their code of manners, and increasingly by their laws, from speaking out as she does. Should they perceive themselves to be losing the cultural war, or in danger of being forced either by their governments or by the pressure of demography to submit to any sort of Islamized Europe, their own rage is likely to be fearful.

In this sense Fallaci's books are an unmistakable call to action. Any continuation of the present pattern, in which aggressive demands for Islamic exception and privilege escalate in tandem with the submissiveness of legally constituted authority and the acquiescence of the privileged classes, is bound in the end to evoke a violent counter-response. They are a call not only to faltering or complicit Europeans but to Europe's Muslims as well, who have everything to lose from political Islam and, if they fail to fight it, nothing to gain. Oriana Fallaci may be deaf to their plight, but her battle is theirs as well.

We mourn the death of

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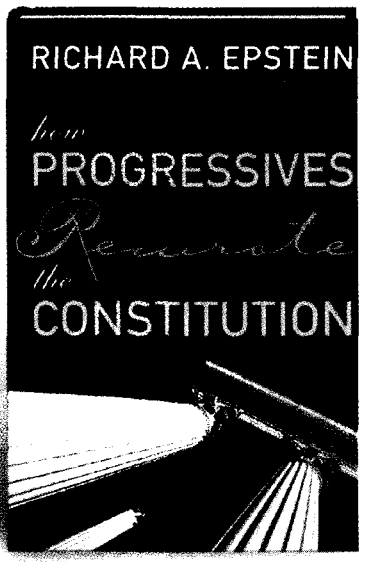

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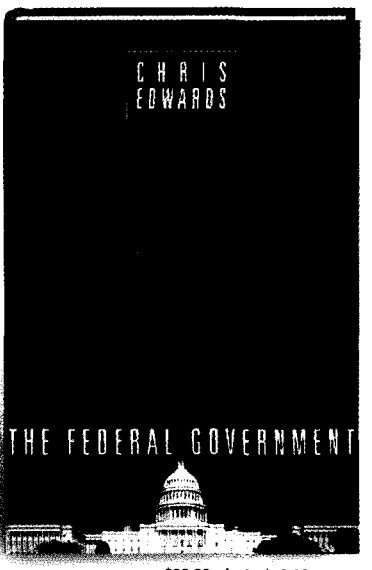

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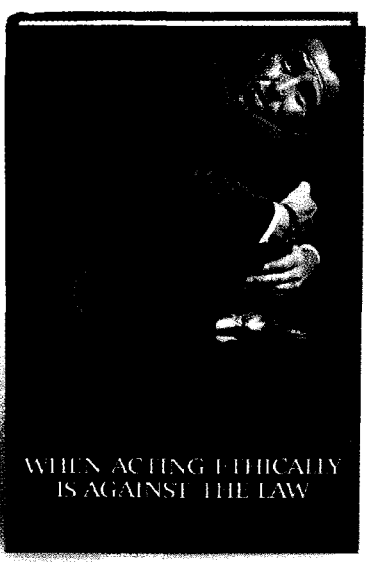

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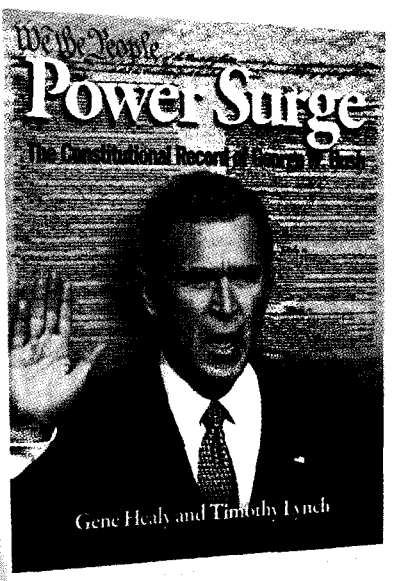

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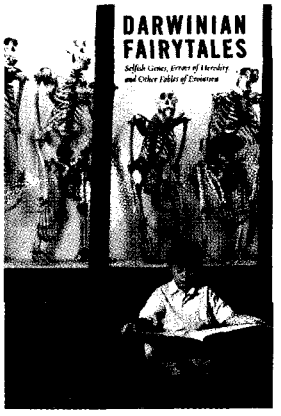

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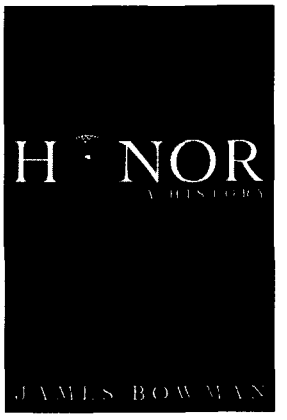

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